

CLOSE UP

*The Only Magazine Devoted to Films
as an Art*



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REVUE MENSUELLE ILLUSTRÉE
DE L'ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN
DIRECTEUR: P.-O. VAN HEGHE

Par son numéro de 1^{er} octobre 1930

3^{me} ANNÉE

PU CLOSE

NOTRE NOUVELLE FORMULE

6 NUMÉROS ORDINAIRES 6 VOLUMES SPÉCIAUX

PAR AN

175 francs pour la Belgique
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Assistant Editor : BRYHER

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Vol. VI. No. 1

July 1930

AS IS

BY THE EDITOR.

One of the reasons why I do not like "film-theory," text-book acquired, text-book practised, text-book formulated, is that film theory cannot be learned that way. It is not film theory in fact, but remains as much the author's original, mystical possession thus outpoured as when originally rocked in the cradle of his deep and scheming brain.

The only thing is this: we love to talk.

By flushing the torrent of our meditation upon the innocent minds of those ready to listen we are apt to enjoy the beatific sense of endocctrining an ignorant world with some primary foundation of truth and uplift.

We are enriched—very seldom those who no matter how obligingly or assimilatively listen.

It is this way. In every elucidation, every "higher-education," something original—germinal—remains ungiven, hidden, nurtured and flowering only in the original soil of its creator's being. That something is a kind of sublime or arrogant conviction, some self-magnification which certainly

nobody else can, or would care to share. Even though it alone is valid and of value.

The theory as it remains, drained, dry, a residue, is ambiguous, amorphous, ready to be adapted to almost any use, interpretable into this or that at will. Some such thing I mean when I deplore the tendency or need in people to rush forward at all times with statements, edicts, pronunciamientos, finalities, concerning all manner of things—in this instance, cinema.

It is significant of human nature that partaking of a vastness, with which it cannot, or does not choose to cope, it seeks in all things first their *limits*. Having determined these by a few surprisingly casual stipulations, it feels at once better, wiser, more at grips with reality—begins, in short, ever so imperceptibly to swagger. “I,” says human-nature, “have recognised the limits of this subject. I see the boundary-post, (but not the railings which make it a park or a gentleman’s estate). And now I shall proceed to explore, develop and fitly govern.”—The omnipotence illusion in full blast!

It is a primitive biological reflection that any etiquette of choice, of arbitrary, casual, deliberate choice—any getting together to approve certain facets of existence and boycott others as too profound, abstruse, too this or that or the other—is in man desire for mastery; a means of making his weight felt if not by the forces of nature, at least by himself and his kind; a means of pruning his mind of that with which he cannot, as part of a “civilised social structure” immediately cope.

Thus theory at its source—the seeing of wider horizons ob-

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jectively—becomes to later minds the railings that make those horizons corrals or pens. Arts have all been crippled by them—literature, perhaps, most of all. “But it doesn’t make sense” remains the final argument of those who have learnt, who have never had any other inkling, that the “art-form” is at best a sorry dwarf, no matter what the art. “Art-form” is the bandage that deformed the Chinese ladies’ feet, there is no growth beyond its stranglehold. When you reach its limits you twist round—and round and round—spinning a cocoon of sameness like the roots of a flower left in a flower-pot, a pallid, protective, fibrous sheath. Theory is the protection of the undistinguished. “Art-form” is the *carte-d’identité* of the creative nonentity.

It is in the translation of *teaching* into *learning* that some willingness is lost, some enthusiasm—and some doubt creeps in. One of the scholars may yawn at the moment when he should be realising that all worthy teaching is a matter of *symbols*, and the mere spoken or written word, as such—well, is oil without the flame. Consider the degeneration of the christian formula . . . symbols neglected, perverted or overlooked. Christ’s words of human sympathy turned glibly round to justify those tight-lipped crimes of Church and State. But reflect above all how little—if indeed any—consideration from friend or foe has been given to the possibility that what was good in Galilee so many hundred years ago may not meet every need of modern man, this and every year of (can you doubt it?) grace.

So much for theory let loose.

Theory is guess-work, put down as a statement and learned

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as a fact. The artist worthy of the name, has something richer to sustain him. It is the small-fry always and everywhere who makes a hash of things. You know the type—so good a craftsman along thoroughly tried and formalised lines, so ready with his “facts,” his reference, a very inexorable fiend for “form,” a starched, prehensile, cautious face, he *knows* in his meatless heart of hearts that others can do better. His one claim to distinction : he has *learnt*. He knows what’s what, he does !

Actually he has learnt nothing—except to be a harmful pest. The craze for formulas is one of man’s most flaccid traits. It is the cowardice imposed on him by the wider horizons grown narrow of an old, old pioneering.

Fortunately for us, our kino theories must wait. The rush of sound and colour, width and television makes all pronouncements vain. This commences the fourth of *Close Up*’s years. And the one thing we have, any of us, learnt is Watch and Pray. In these three years the most enlightening of our few rewards has been the pod-like popping of the corks that were intended to keep film-art theories bottled in their place. New wine in the oldest of old bottles ! Theorems not theories, experiments not repetition.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

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THE RELATIVITY OF TRANSITION

For us, there are no less than fifteen aspects of relativity in cinema, but before we discover them there must be some preliminary explanation of the principles of perceptual relativity.

The cinematic image-impression of an object, may be :

- (1) in motion (relatively to the camera eye—spatial transition),
- (2) in a state of tonal (monochrome) transition,
- (3) in a state of colour transition,
- (4) in an aspect of " sound value " transition (if it has any),
- (5) in an aspect of " latent-psychic import " transition, both from the visual and sonal points of view.

Since transition is always relative to *one* something else, we are presented with a mathematical problem to find the number of possible aspects of relativity (one to one) which may evolve from combinations two at a time from the above list. Thus we may speak of " motion in relation to sound value transition " (or for the sake of briefness, the aspect of relativity 1-4) in cinema, and easily convince ourselves that we are talking sense. The number of combinations of five things in pairs is fortunately no more than fifteen. Here is a scheme which includes all the possibles :

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Principle

1 to 1;
2 „ 2;
3 „ 3;
4 „ 4;
5 „ 5.

Subsidiary.

1 to 2; 2 to 3; 3 to 4; 4 to 5.
1 „ 3; 2 „ 4; 3 „ 5,
1 „ 4; 2 „ 5.
1 „ 5.

This scheme is prepared for the fullest development of commercial cinema, which presumably is tending to the full inclusion of colour and sound. Stereoscopic cinema comes under the aspect (1), spatial transition.

The first four (principle) aspects 1-1; 2-2; 3-3; 4-4; are by nature purely the manifest content of the film.

We shall review them as briefly as possible.

(1-1) Relativity of motion.

This may be obtained by a variety of methods, all mechano-geometrical in significance, involving flying cameras, moving objects, changing perspective, etc. In composite shots and mixes involving this aspect of relativity, the remarkable mental effects of "inertia" such as were described by myself in *Mechanisms of Cinema* may be induced. With no more material consciously used, by producers, than this, we have seen excellent essays in pure motion. The masters have often been content to explore this first and obviously primary aspect of cinema . . . "cinema at its source."

Let us not overlook certain very serious defects which are absolute, and inherent in the motion picture from the day of its birth. Rapid rhythms of the order of 16 (or its multiples) per second are for obvious reasons, unsuitable for cinematograph.

(2-2) Tonal (monochrome) relativity,
is a principle aspect which has been employed almost to the

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exclusion of other aspects in films of the genre *Light Rhythms*, whilst on the other hand *La Nuit Electrique* ignored tonal relativity absolutely. This is also usual in the cartoon (see *Cinderella* which possessed but three flat wash tones and no transition of tone values). We can record some remarkable successes completely free from mental monotony.

How relativity of motion may be intensified in its impressionism by the help of a correlative tonal transition, is properly the subject of the "subsidiary aspect" (1-2). The subsidiary aspects as a rule will be found to give rise to what I have called the latent content of the strip, whilst the "principle" ones (excepting 5 to 5) are almost always associated with the manifest content.

The whole subject of total light values of adjacent strips is of course more a matter of the relative light values. It is my impression, however, that the eye does not judge the total light value on the whole of the screen with very much refinement, so that total tone relativity is cruder, or has to be more pronounced, than in the ordinary sense indicated. I am sure it is of more importance when considered from the back of the cinema hall, where total light value is diminished from the outset due to the *square* of the distance.

(3-3) Colour relativity.

As there is little refinement yet in the commercial colour processes, I will not cite examples. Like every other department of physical optics, there is profound organization here, and the whole subject is extremely technical. Much has been heard of "primary colours," but how little of "complementary colours" in this regard? The painter works with primary

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colours (at least always uppermost in his mind) which are of vast importance to him, but the colour cinema will have to keep complementary colours in strict regard. Cinema must be judged and artistically ruled by its own set of conditions. The retinal "persistence" of the image of a coloured object is manifest always by its "complementary" colour impression, which persists some time after the object has moved away. Thus a red hat which has remained stationary for even a very brief period, will cause a momentary *green* impression (persistence) in that place after it has moved. If the "red hat" has been singing for three minutes, and for three minutes we have been looking down the throat past the tonsils of its wearer, when that hat moves away, it is just possible that a prima-donna will go a sickly green. A green background will nullify this purely retinal but inartistic impression. This is complementary relativity in colour movement, the subject partly of (1-3). All the conditions of (2-2) which apply to monochromatic tones now apply equally to *each* colour considered separately. They apply *inversely* as between adjacent *complementary* colours in the process of tone transition. The more important tone areas only can be considered in production.

(4-4) Relativity of sound values of objects and persons.

I would like to hear the president of St. Dunstan's lecture on this, for the special aspect (4-4) is one which must be considered absolutely from a "blind" impression. I would listen to him in total darkness for preference. Radio has explored it with rather less success than was hoped for. With the perfection of "stereoscopic recording" (stereophony) in the talkies, the relativity of sound values will follow very closely

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the laws governing spatial relativity of motion. At the moment stereophony has not arrived and in consequence we rely on the sight impression very largely. Here, in the future, is cinema beyond the confines of the screen . . . in front of the screen . . . behind the observer! Great Gabbo! . . . what shall we come to? This aspect, therefore (in lieu of further development) devolves upon (1-4) (Relativity of sound to visual motion) almost entirely.

Here we leave the purely manifest content of cinema for more important latent aspects. Without interrelation between the five principle classes of transition, without cross-relativity, compound cinema will remain hybrid and therefore sterile of all that we rightly expect from our beloved art.

(5-5) Relativity of Latent Import, (Visual and sonal.)

is really divided into three subsections: visual to visual; (that is, *via* visual impressions) visual to sonal; and sonal to sonal; but as all three are functions of the unconscious and result in visual sublimation, the subject need not be divided. Eisenstein's explanation is that visual and sonal *overtones* are of the same *dimension*, and may therefore be added or compounded. My own theory identifies the *dimensions* of Eisenstein with the "planes of psychic activity" of Freud. The Freudian Dream Theory relies on an inherent human preference for visual symbolism, imagery, and picturization in its reaction to the *latent* aspects of impinging cinematic content. I say "cinematic content" and mean cinema in the absolute sense . . . cinema which existed before the invention of the motion picture camera and projector.

Eisenstein has developed a montage technique which so

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completely covers this Relativity of Latent Content (in adjacent strips) that I shall not attempt to reopen the subject here. On the other hand, J. Shige Sudzuki in *An Aspect Of Cinema Construction*—(*Close Up*, March, 1929), has treated the subject from a musical point of view. He writes of "thema," "tempo," and "accent," and actually suggests that these should be orchestrated as in music, according to "keys," "scales," "timbre" of instruments, etc. His instruments are the actors, and there is something fascinating about the idea of an "orchestra" and a "conductor."

(1-2) The Relativity of motion to tone transition.

Each phase is work for a different artist. The art of the photographer finds fullest scope in the relation of tonality to motion . . . the play of light and shade in transition. There is nowhere to begin and nowhere to end in what must always remain an artistically disorganized field of relationships, from which to weld mood and atmosphere together. There may be smooth and warm rhythms or smooth, oily, cold rhythms . . . brilliantly scintillating coldness or sparkling warmth . . . latent subtlety of distinction which at source is psychological. The film *H2O* is perhaps one of the classical essays.

The late German Continental lighting proved how important to the telling of a story is the attention to lighting . . . "low key" being responsible for many of the Ufa masterpieces. German studios use a mixture of daylight, electric, and incandescent . . . which incidentally links up exteriors, interiors, and close ups . . . and it seems after all, very logical. Much of the failure of *latency* felt in French films, might be traced to poor studio equipment or none at all. Surely the French are the most latent people on earth?

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10 With (1-2) I shall link (1-3), although technically colour presents far greater difficulties. Fortunately colour transition is very rare . . . avant-garde please note! Shall we someday have a *Mystère du Château du Dé* with a green "Nobody" who turns pink or yellow according to the throw kaliedoscopic dice?

(1-4) Motion relative to sound value.

Producers do not seem to have made up their minds about the change of sound volume for a sudden change of relative distance of the noisy object from the camera. I suspect this is one of the reasons for the plot to kill the close up . . . large screen, etc., etc. A tiny black spot with white gloves and white lips issues forth sounds in great volume . . . volume which is the same no matter how near (until the tears almost drip onto us!) we may approach. (Oh Al!)

The talkie camera has a bleary eye and an ear which may be just anywhere . . . anything up to 50 feet away. Why the ear should not be almost invariably close to the eye is a subtlety beyond me. Thank goodness that stereophonic recording will vindicate my rooted prejudice for wanting to feel normal about the head when in a cinema. Also, to see someone singing at 20 foot range and hear his voice from behind, will once and for all eliminate the odious "double." The ventriloquial double will command an enormous salary! On the other hand, doubles could be suspended over stars after the fashion of microphones! Very good suggestion.

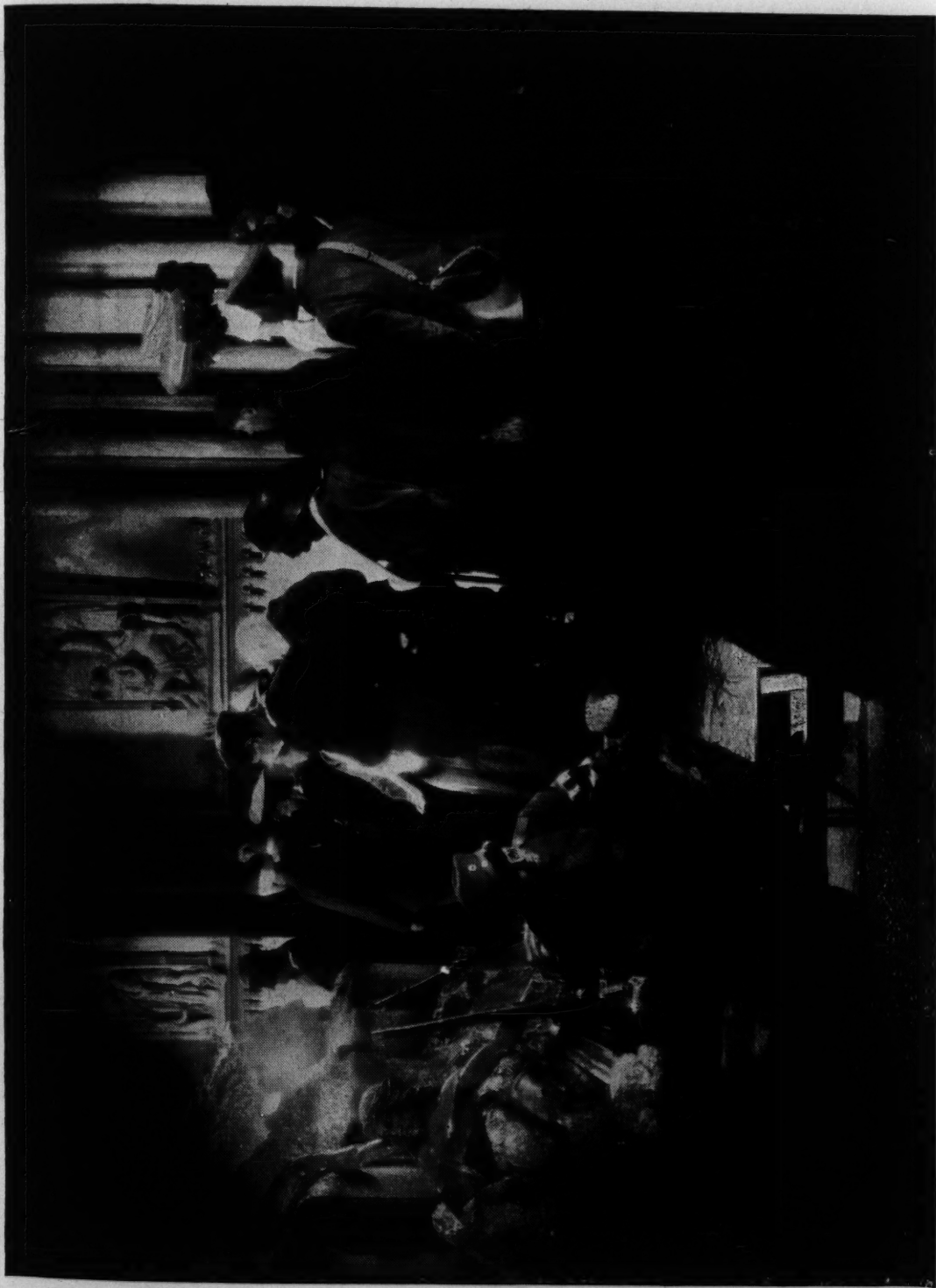
The general principles of sound to sight relations in regard to motion appear to be straightforward, and sound is supposed to add to the suggestiveness of a calamitous approach, or a heartrending leavetaking!

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(1-5) (to which may be coupled (4-5)). The relativity of motion and latent import. (Visually or sonally realised.) The cessation of motion is dramatic . . . almost any situation which has been developing along carefully provoked psychic lines, may be brought to a penultimate stage by the dramatic use of a cessation of motion . . . for a brief moment. Then comes the climax. On the other hand, motion can be introduced to relieve the tension . . . "do something!" is on our lips! (once again a good talkie and Western Electric recording have got you in their spell . . .!!) If sound effects produce either the cessation or starting off of motion, then the talkie has justified itself somewhat! Even a railway whistle . . . causes the train to move off . . . then sound is justified. Tone transition (monochrome) in relation to latency (2-5) is a delicate refinement, incapable of a general analysis, whilst colour to latency (3-5) seems most unlikely to occur . . . blushing is not done! I think I am correct in saying that there has been one colour-music film . . . if not there is sure to be. (3-4) must therefore wait. The remaining aspects (2-3) and (2-4) are automatically produced, and therefore devolve upon other relations already discussed.

Now that I have cross related all the pairs of "aspects of transition" I feel that I have covered all the truly "cinematic" aspects of cinema as it may be in the future. For cinema is composed of transitions . . . and in the study of their relative aspects, lies much, if not all, that we can hope to get out of it. My analysis is by no means exhaustive.

L. SAALSCHUTZ.



Westfront, 1918, a Nero-Film directed by G. W. Pabst. This harrowing epic of the war has created history in Germany, and it is to be hoped that audiences in England and America, who have, and will have, the opportunity to see the Universal *All Quiet*, will not have to miss this acclaimed masterpiece. A wrecked church, used as a temporary hospital, is significantly decorated with panels representing stations of the cross. At left, the shattered effigy of Christ lies like a dead soldier, spread across debris and flung-down rifles.



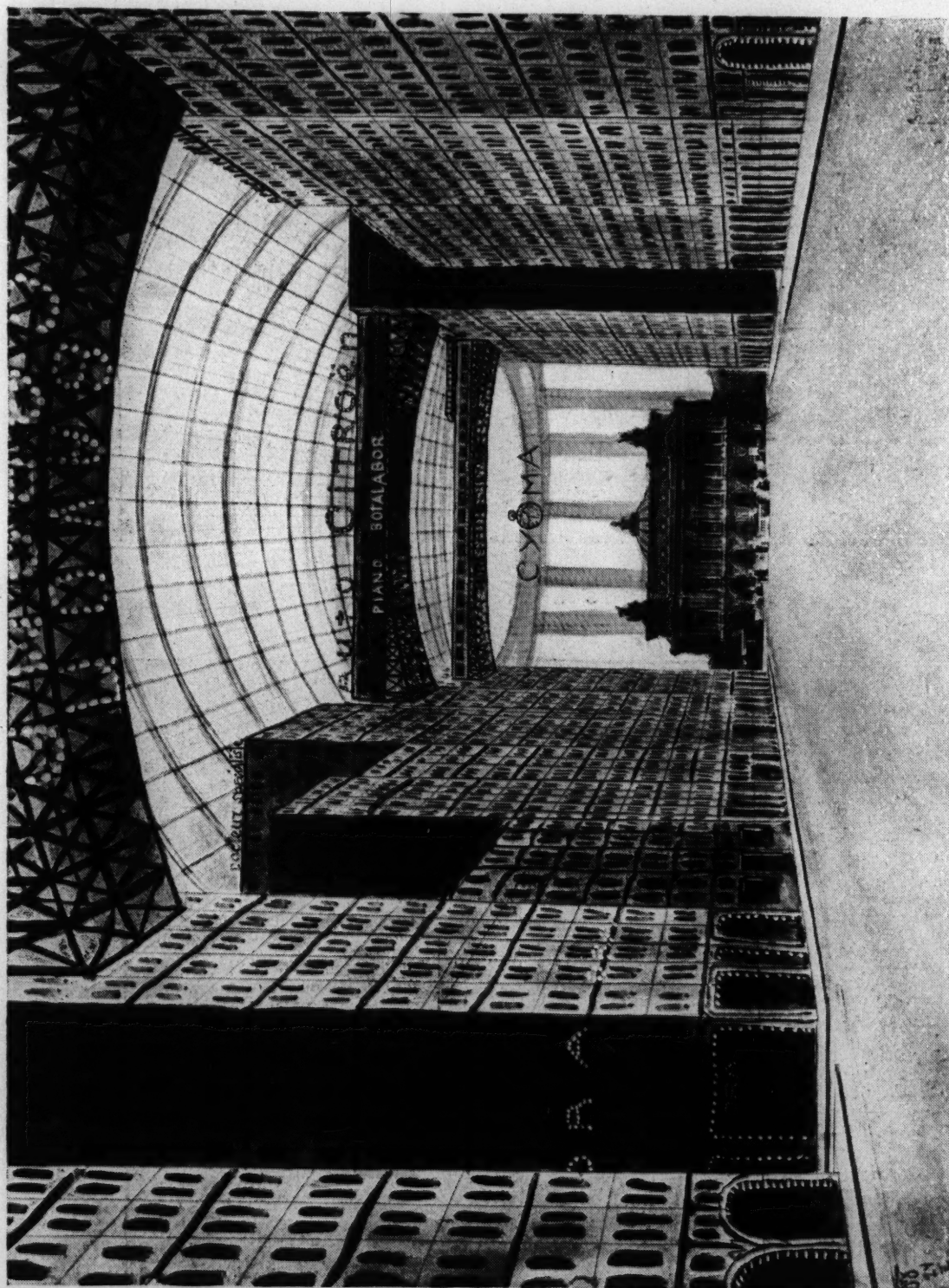
Jacky Monnier in Westfront, 1918.



Fritz Kampers in *Westfront, 1918*.

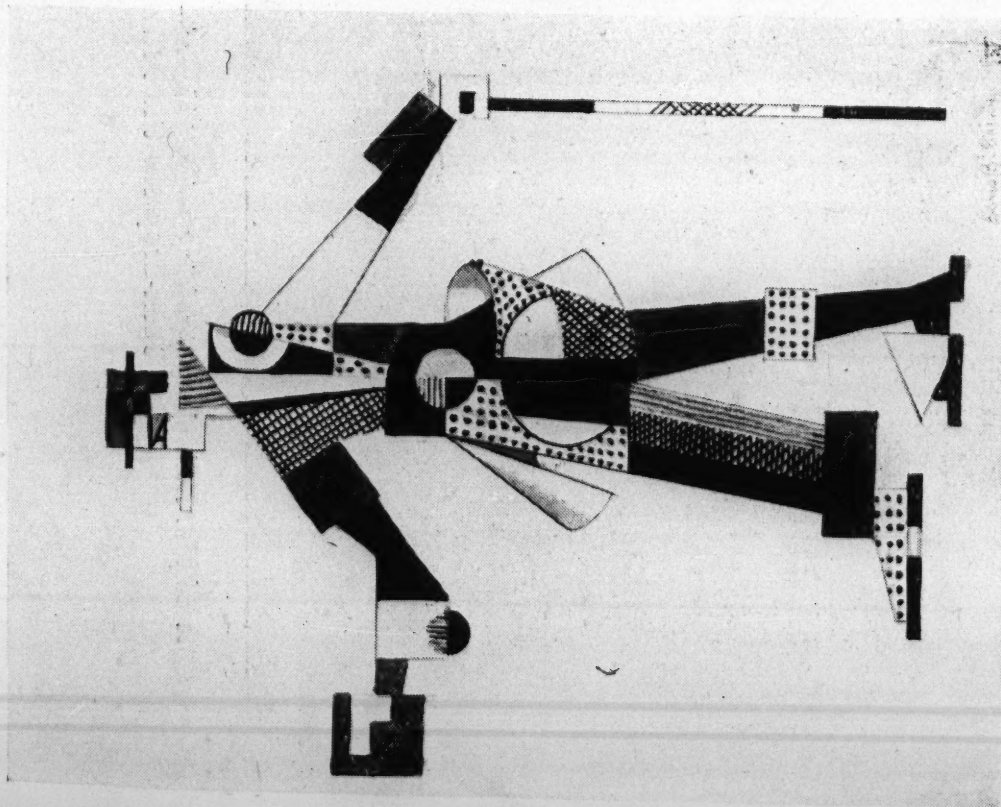


Morphia is injected to relieve the agony of a shot-away stomach. Fritz Kampers in *Westfront, 1918*. One of those kindly acts which makes war "such fun" for the dear tommies.

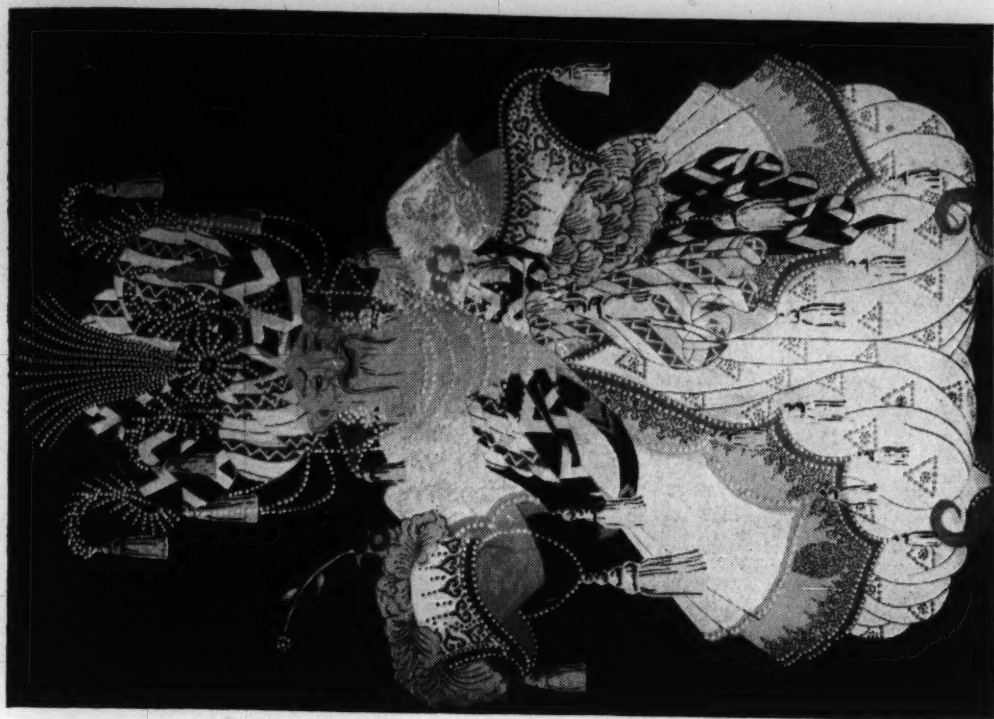


Exclusive reproductions of designs by Boris Bilinsky, whose recent exhibition of scenes and costumes for twelve films, held at the Galerie de France, Paris, has created for him an even wider following of admirers. The above is the Avenue de l'Opera, Paris, in 1975. A decor for the film 1975, conceived by Ivan Mosjoukine in 1924, but never turned. Ironically, the one building that remains unchanged is the appalling Opera itself !

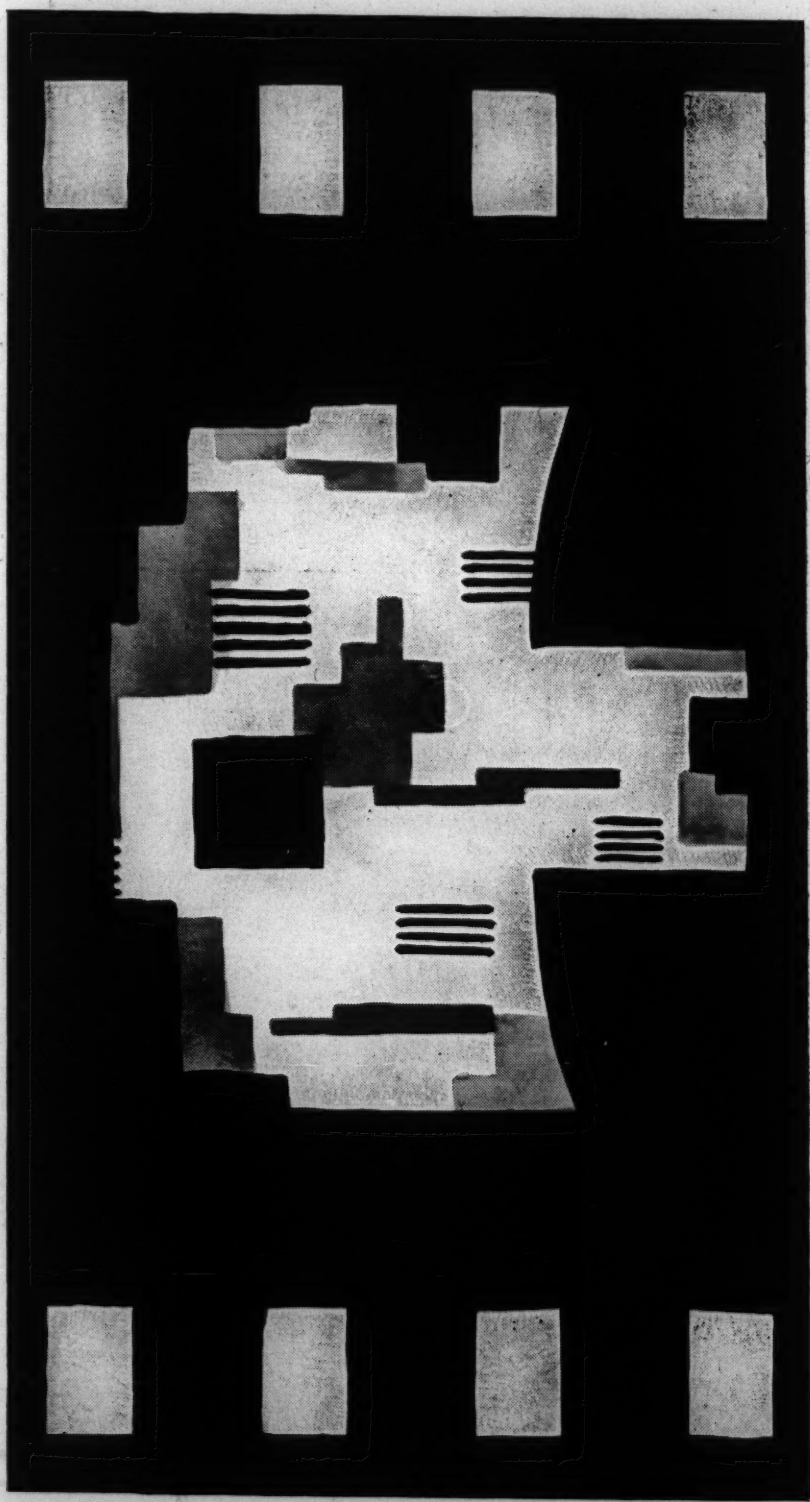
that remains unchanged is the appalling Opera itself !



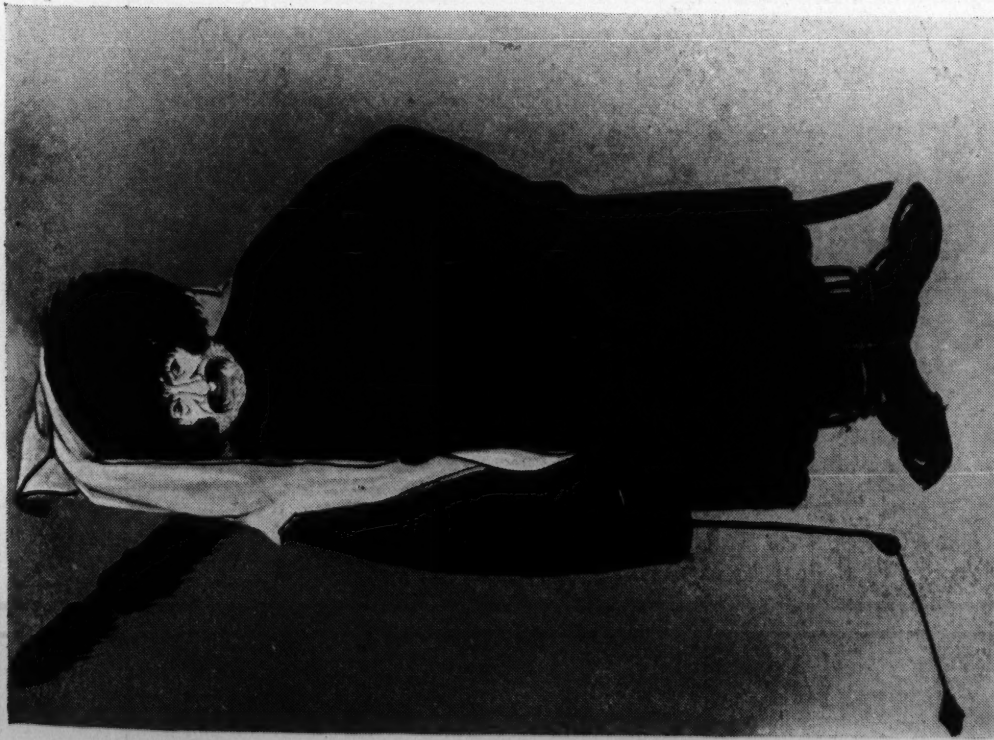
"A monsieur in the vision fantasque." 1975.
Design by Boris Bilinsky.



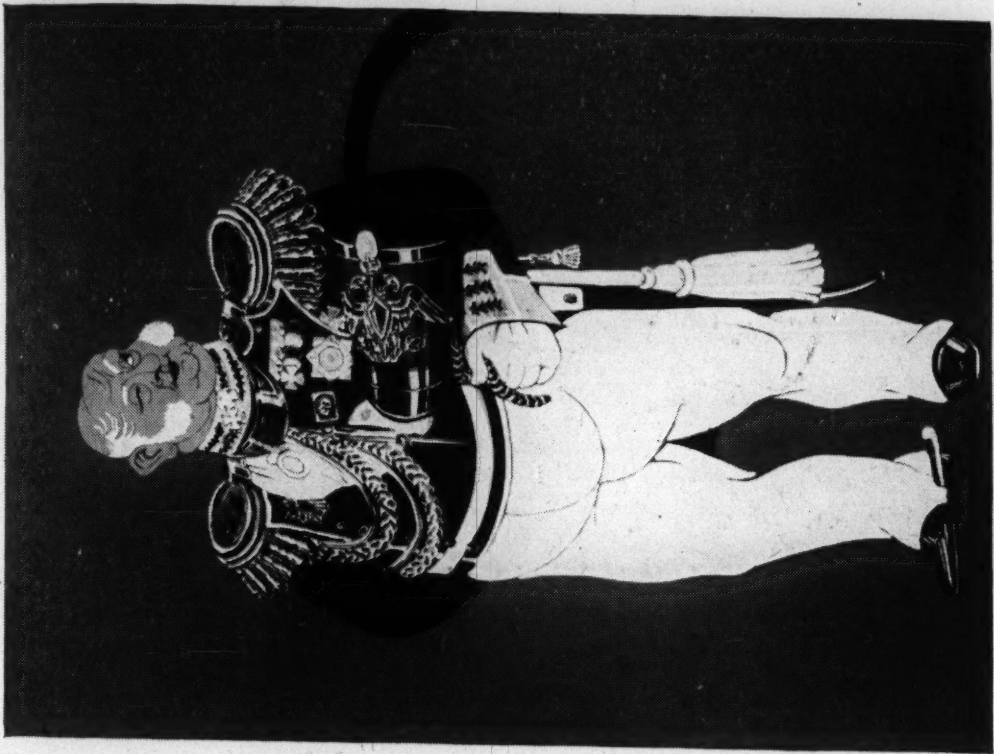
The sultan Chariar—a gorgeous design by Bilinsky for the film *Sheherazade* (*Secrets of the Orient*), produced by A. Wolkoff for Ufa in 1928. The picture in its original colours is in itself a work of art.



One of Mr. Bilinsky's *projéts cinégraphiques*—an image of a film projected as theatrical decor on the back-drop for the *Miracle de Saint Georges*, by Remisoff.



A Russian soldier in Caucasian costume—a design by Boris Bolinsky for the 1929 Ufa film, *The White Devil*, a Bloch-Rabinovitsch production directed by Alexander Wolkoff. The 1850 epoch is well represented in this and in the accompanying sketch for the general.



A Russian General. A Boris Bolinsky design for *The White Devil*, in which Ivan Mosjoukine was starred—though, needless to say, not in the trappings of the old gentleman so graphically depicted above.



From *Market in Berlin*, a film of "short-metragé" recently shown in Berlin and by the London Film Society. The film was made by Wilfried Basse for Basse-Film, G.m.b.H. at the weekly market in the well-known Wittenbergplatz. The old lady is collecting refuse when the market is over.



Later. The cleaning up. Hoses have swept the earth of its litter. This "shot" drew forth applause from the Berlin audience.

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FLESH: THE ALL-EVERYTHING SCENARIO

Flesh. Flesh. More flesh. Still more flesh. Flesh yielding, flesh dominant, flesh ubiquitous, flesh triumphant. Flesh exotic, flesh erotic. FLESH.

Atta boy.

That's quite enough of that. (Remark by Girl, to Soldier.) Now, to quit the Gertrude Stein stuff and get on with the job. (Same Girl, later Date, different Soldier) there are all sorts of films. Only most of them don't, which may be subtle if you trouble to think it out.

With the pre-breakfast clearness of the philosopher, and it is so easy to be a sage before onions, let us look into the future, where we find a face which only a mother could love, and that with difficulty.

The lusciousness of contemporary cinema is as nothing compared with the years ahead, when the all-smelling, all-feeling masterpieces will have their way. Gone will be the casual jolt (entirely Wardour Street visionary) at the two-dimensional haunches, gone the ecstatic abandon felt by the servant girl when the villain proceeds to put over his stuff.

Fade out.

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Cinematic literature. The use of the inanimate image.

I visualize, smell, and feel the all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing, all-colour, all-smelling, all-feeling masterpiece of the future. The mechanics are beyond me. Mine are the oscillations of the crystal set mentality.

The first cinema art form—hieroglyphics.

How the all-smelling, all-feeling attachments can be mechanically perfected leaves me cold. Indent ideas about rose sprayers and programme girls.

If the circumference of a circle is 13 times the distance across any given triangle when an anticyclone is centred north of Zanzibar, how many rings around Rosie will be required to empty the first bath from Tap C while Tap D is filling it during the winter hibernation of the common and domestic swallow, *Hirundo Hirundinidae*, otherwise known as the Gurgle in Ordinary?

Let us consider the all-everything scenario, if it bears consideration which is highly doubtful. Being all-everything, it must have universal entertainment, which means to say that in describing the finished product the honest critic will have to pause while recollecting whether or not there is an "e" in lousy.

Revue is indicated; the review of revues.

The all-everything scenario. Consider the lilies; they talk not, neither do they squawk, but yet I tell you that *Gold Diggers of Broadway* in all its colour sequences was never arrayed as one of these. Which is perhaps just as well.

In mapping out the screen's first Gigantic All-Everything, let us remark, for the benefit of Carl Laemmle and the inspiration of Dupont, that revue must have unity. Having re-

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membered Hollywood's weaknesses, and bearing in mind the invaluable tuition in audience appeal we endured last month, let us decide to unify our all-everything what-not around something universally appealing, a seaside holiday, where it might be said that a Man's an ass for a' that.

This is the perfect box-office subject; it is surprising it has not been used before. It has the appealing idealism of rose-coloured adolescent daydreams, the inspiring smugness of youth at play, the unfailing popular suggestion of romance, etc., etc.

Theme song, something about flies round a jam pot.

Having made up our minds to give the impressarios something to think about, we might as well open our revue with a Bandstand Ensemble. We have to open it with something.

The predominant note in the opening will be lively, there will be a touch of what British directors, addressing crowd artistes, describe as "broad animation," which means the wild waving of life and limb. The musical background will be jazzy, the outstanding colour a pink-purple. The Smell Major will be cheap *eau de Cologne*, and the Feeling Track, by which our resourceful engineers will make their determined attack on the citadel of the back rows, will suggest that limpness which accompanies a Turkish bath.

The movement, establishing the opening tide in the rhythmic flow of the picture (you know Hollywood's getting arty, don't you?) will be a continuous perambulation of the female of the species, anti-clockwise across the screen, with periodic pauses, something like waves on a flat shore, a subsidiary movement which will be established later when the audience want a little Stark Beauty.

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Speaking of Stark Beauty, of course, suggests the chorus dances for the opening number, to the tune of a theme song—deftly switching the audience-mind to the wonders of the stereoscopic screen, *I'm all in the depths for you*.

The steady crescendo of the opening, culminating in a blaze of purple, a strong overdose of cheap perfume, and full tilt on the Feeling Track with the Turkish bath stuff, will culminate, after some spectacular colour-trick photography in which the bandstand will spin round like a coin in the air and the Turkish bath stuff will positively sizzle, while the sound track emits an agony-cry usually associated with a giggle of typists, in the next movement, a surf bathing scene.

Here the smelling apparatus will be vaguely reminiscent of rank seaweed. Already the endless possibilities of a lap dissolve from a Turkish bath to a sewer pipe must be presenting themselves to the best all-everything film directors.

The Feeling Track will put over a suggestion of warm sea water, preferably with a tinge of wetness. The feeling of water will no doubt be a novelty booking for many a popular audience. The colour, obviously, will be a golden tint suggestive of sand.

In order to allow for general entertainment, this sequence can be used in the cutting room to connect the picture, and the theme should be made the scaffold for exercises on all known forms of public apathy. The first time it appears the comedian, very fat, with horizontally striped costume, can do his stuff in the water, next Mother Love can have its innings. (The poor little thing, will it drown? No, the handsome young man has saved it. What a pity.) Then again, use can be found for swimming as an excuse for Sex Appeal. Bathing

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beauty competitions. Leap frog. Graham Cutts camera angles.

Towards the end of the film, when Sterner Realities of Life (where are all those capitals?) are having their innings, Devotion can be introduced. The two pals. Who is to get in first and see if it's cold?

Or Fatherlove. (If the little b—— doesn't learn to swim now when the Hades will he?)

Or Sisterlove. (She was only a baker's daughter, but oh, how she needed a beau.)

Or Sacrifice. (One of us must drown, darling; women and children first.)

Or Romance. (I leave it to you.)

The smell-feel synchronization here is a little difficult. Only the most astute psychologists will be able to be film directors in a few years' time, which means that the same old gang will make the same old stuff, as before.

Rosemary for remembrance, and the smell of new-mown hay and the feel of a fox terrier about to bite a juicy portion of calf for Romance. Feeling-montage. The use of the transposed metaphor.

Continuing with the development of the masterpiece, broad comedy will have its day in the form of a landlady scene in an apartment house. No rehearsals will be necessary and an odd aspidistra will be the chief prop.

The smell here will be musty, and the Feeling Track will register something dirty in the lower octaves. After fading out on a perfect riot of low comedy it would be as well to flash in (with the stock bathing stuff) on a pretty-pretty note, just

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to keep the balance even and to stop the audience from getting too wide-awake.

Next, as a sop to those of us who are sufficiently silly to take anything seriously, something short and abstract is called for. One hundred feet of footage might safely be allotted to it, as for so brief a space the great heart of the British public would merely think it was the projector going mad.

Think of the possibilities. The unification of movement, colour, depth, smell, and feeling.

After the hysterics this exhibition of debased interest in matters cinematic would generally occasion have subsided, the masterpiece could slip into its great highlight, the romantic theme song, shot against a background of sea and sadness. Something plaintive, like a moon on a rotting garden.

The purple colour movement in the film's montage would come right out on top here, and the Feeling Track could put over something akin to the first hint of chickenpox breaking out, while the good old rose sprayers could emit a quiet suggestion of babies and face powder.

High art could now enjoy its little hour or two, with some interludes by a military band on the pier. Any pier and any band would do. They are all the same. The colour scheme, naturally, would be mainly red, the smell vaguely sergeant-major, and the feeling counterpoint would be cut off.

There is no feeling in a military band. . . More possibilities for the all-everything directors; the withdrawal of one particular sense for purposes of cinematic satire.

By now it can safely be assumed that all members of the audience will have had some return for their sixpences, and as a warning that things are on their last legs and that ideas

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are running out (grateful sighs from unwary readers) the second big romantic theme song can be plugged for awhile.

The setting, smell and feeling synchronization as before. Only more so.

Now, for a brief touch of sophistication, just to appeal to the Golders Green district. A rose by any other name. . .

A sequence, wedged in between Motherlove on the surf and a few more bathing belles, among the Smart Set. Do not hurt them, gentle policeman, that are really only tight.

A smart hotel sequence. Registers. The curious fact that out of every hundred inhabitants of the smart set, ninety-five are called Smith over the week-end. Perhaps a mannequin parade. Certainly a dressing room, and some dialogue, with the triangular motive predominant. No one is angry, or jealous. But just bored. It is so tedious, being interested in anything.

The Feeling apparatus will remind one somewhat of the last few sermons one heard. That dream-state condition, where the mind flits idly from random mutterings to half-formed images. A feeling of supreme mental blankness. This could be suggested through the touch-sense by registering the effect of a large block of ice completely enveloping the whole body.

The smell, of course, will be ultra-modern. And frightfully sophisticated. A Woolworth bargain basement, or something of the sort.

Back once more to the bathers. It is evening. It is more than evening. The moon is shining. (You know those studio moons, which know no wane. Reclining gracefully against a swaying backcloth.)

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A repetition of the first theme song. It must be plugged. It must be plugged. Smell and feeling as before, only more powerful.

A new profession. Air changing in a super cinema.

A love motif. (Yes, another.) Track shots, past innumerable couples, babbling like the brook. The Feeling emission will be that of a small boy in the presence of his headmaster.

Our revue is nearly completed. Wanted; a good finale. It must necessarily go back to the first movement, the Bandstand Ensemble. One must be symmetrical in these days when P. G. Wodehouse is writing for the screen.

And so, back to the joyless cuties; the mixture as before. The purple colour scheme gets warmer, the smelling apparatus belches a suggestion of hot oil (so realistic, the contemporary cinema) the Feel-movement is doing pins and needles.

There is a blaze of Technicoloured light, the people and the bandstand revolve, like a coin being tossed, the hot oil spills over and the front row of the stalls vows to spend an extra threepence next time. The movement increases its speed, the component parts lose their identity in a whirl of colour, stabbing out, trick title-like, the word

SIN

to the tune of all the theme songs played together (how modern, this film score business).

The pace continues. The whirlpool colour mass on the screen is mentally coupled with the sudden merging of all the smell-movements in the film, curiously resembling the aroma of fried bacon in places like old Arizona. The smell increases the screen, until now a huge affair, diminishes suddenly, and

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the colours clash (purple predominant) into the word

SAND

—and such a profound word, too.

Back to the big screen once more. Solid letters, the gift of the third dimensional, hurl themselves out at the audience, jogging the dozers in the back rows, blazing and stabbing in the dark theatre like lightening seen through a forest. The Feeling counterpoints from the picture merge together, giving the patrons a feeling of overwhelming stupidity in the presence of the great Spirit of the Movies, the whole issue working up into a frenzy of sound as the screen stabs out the word

SUNSHINE.

The end. The fight for the exits. The chief Feeling, after all, was merely a pain in the neck. By the way, it's a Hugh Castle Production. Don't forget.

HUGH CASTLE.

THE REVIVAL OF NATURALISM

THE birth and progress of the Naturalistic novel during the nineteenth century should be familiar to all. So also should the fight pursued with inexhaustible energy by the exponents of Naturalism against the Academic and Romantic traditions. That the battleground of this struggle, with its far-reaching

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effects, should have been France is not unnatural. New ideas were at the same time revolutionizing painting and politics. Impressionism and Socialism. And France has always been a country eminently suited as an environment for intellectual campaigns.

In brief, the Naturalistic novel proceeded from Balzac, (hidebound in a defence of monarchy and authority yet "observing from life") to Gustave Flaubert, who laid the foundation of the new movement in the immortal and at the time immoral *Madame Bovary*. But Flaubert turned his back on the realistic method, disdainful of his own accomplishment. It was for Zola and his disciples to lift the stone of Naturalism and to fling it in the face of the world. And the missile has left its dent on the face of the cinema.

Zola. Zola.* I have long wanted to probe the connection that lies between this great figure and the cinema. To discover why so many of his novels have been found peculiarly suitable for filmic purposes. Above all, to investigate the bond, strong and I believe of the greatest significance, that exists between the champion of Naturalism and the so-called naturalistic directors of the Soviet left-wing.

Apart from a long survey of his novels, each of which is of great length demanding endless perseverance from a reader accustomed to-day to books of comparative brevity, investigation is now made easily possible by the publication of Matthew Josephson's *Zola and His Time* (Victor Gollancz, London). Therein is made clear much that is of extreme value

* I believe implicitly in a firm mysterious co-relation that lies between name and man.

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to the *cinéaste* by a revelation and close analysis of Zola's methods of working. There will be found in the admirable pages of Mr. Josephson's book matter that both strengthens and explains the bond between the Naturalism of Zola and that of various contemporary film directors. Between the scientific methods of technique that are common to each.

* * *

The foundation of Naturalism was Truth. The spring of Zola's attitude was an exact, truthful, unshrinking observation of nature and man. Inasmuch that without analysis, without method, without deliberate truth there could be no politics any more than literature possible at that time. In fact, no art, no social culture, no purity of existence could exist without scientific method. According to Taine, perhaps the most distinguished thinker in France at the period, vice and virtue were (chemical) products like sugar and vitriol. Here, then, we may remember the constructivism of Pudovkin; the composition of filmic reality out of photographically-recorded natural material.

Throughout all his long series of Naturalistic novels, Zola governed his conception by the outlook of Hippolyte Taine. Convinced that man could not be separated from his *milieu*; that he leaves his imprint upon his exterior life, his house, his furniture, his affairs, his gestures; and that to express everything one must express this multitude of effects and assemble this multitude of causes, Zola ultimately held that a state of environment determines and complete the human being. Thus, when Gervaise, the laundress in *L'Assommoir*, is happy, the street is gay and bright with sun; when she is

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despairing, the gutter-stream is black and filthy; when she is meditative, the water reflects the blue, the deep azure of the summer sky. This *emphasis* of environment in order to *express mood* and its extreme significance in filmic representation is too obvious to need comment. Further, note that the underlying motive of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* was that of a given personality, conceived as a unit in a mass, pitted against its environment, the *milieu* into which it is born. Here, we may recollect the earlier films of Griffith, who placed his characters in their natural sympathetic environment; and Seaström, whose characters are pitted against their environment.

But Zola diverged from Taine's thesis in his selection of characters. For whereas the latter desired general types to be used in strict accord with the theory of environment, Zola showed a preference for the exceptional, the pathological specimen, believing it to be more worthy of the artist. This is a belief that still exists. Compare, for example, the often erotic and neurotic characters of Pabst, revealed by a complex psycho-analytical method of filmic representation, with the raw material of Eisenstein's selection. But, on the other hand, Zola avoided in his arrangement of action the popular "chain of coincidences" and substituted a "natural succession of events," which for filmic purposes should arrive from the conflicting or sympathetic moods of the characters. Zola had always a longing for order, for logical development, for a chain of determined causes and effects.

His rendering of man was purely physiological. It was never his aim to comment or moralize psychologically. He

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desired only to investigate, to expose, to lay everything that he saw in life before the reading public. He stated facts without bias or ulterior meaning. He was a propagandist only for his creed of Naturalism. He studied the behaviour of his characters rather than their mental conflict. He was one of the first novelists to present sex in its true dominating role; but he was concerned alone with its physical aspect. And here again is matter of interest to the *cinéaste*. The film director is equally concerned with behaviour, in order to express the inward thoughts and emotions of his characters by their visually expressive external actions. By psycho-analytical observation, the film director employs every gesture to reveal and build up the personality of his characters. But this is common cinematic knowledge, especially to the Pabstian.

Zola penetrated every strata of humanity. His novels are crowded with natural and unnatural types, each considered physiologically and never psychologically, the product of their environment. Murderers, drunkards, saints, lechers, whores, bourgeois, soldiers, statesmen, shopkeepers, workers. Good, bad, stupid, imbecile, sensible, malicious, angelic. Above all he knew the lower-classes, the masses, the proletariat. Gross, quarrelling, sweaty, sordid, barefisted, bestial, usually unintelligent and oppressed. He had in his youth known poverty, hunger, squalor, depression, as indeed it is necessary for every true artist. We read of his attitude towards such living in *Le Ventre de Paris*, where Lantier speaks of life as an eternal warfare between the Fat and the Thin. Always are the Fat the contented shopkeepers, the bourgeois, the pillars of society; the Thin are the

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oppressed, glowering with hunger, hatred or revolt, scheming for the downfall of their betters. One remembers *New Babylon*. And Zola presented all with such "unshrinking observation," "truth" and "Naturalism" to call forth Ferdinand Brunetière's attack . . . "in his brutal style, his repulsive and ignoble pre-occupations, he has gone further than all other realists. Is Humanity composed only of rascals, madmen and clowns?" To-day, refer to your daily newspaper and read almost any London film critic on Soviet films in general and the work of Pabst in particular. In point, the review of any film that deals with the essential facts of existence.

Zola was aware (as we are aware to-day) that the only way to attack evil was with a hot iron . . . with Truth! The whole of his career he was met with bitter antagonism. Every novel was received with columns of hostile criticism. Abuse of every conceivable kind was heaped upon him. Until, after the famous Dreyfus affair, in which he carried the pursuit of truth outside the covers of his novels into the ramifications of national affairs, he fled into exile. His literature was variously condemned as pornographic, obscene, bestial, brutal, evil, to which came his sole, unanswerable reply: "For me there are no obscene works; there are only poorly conceived and poorly executed ones. Our analyses can no longer be obscene from the moment that they become scientific and contribute a document. . ."

A DOCUMENT? Is that not the nature of a true film?

* * *

To the student perhaps the most interesting characteristic of Zola was his astonishing feeling for mass-movement. For

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the conception of a universal scheme of actions and reactions. The movements and existence of his smaller figures are plaited into the mass-movement of the whole. Take *Germinal*, where the theme was "individual suffering posed against or accompanied by the eternal injustice of the classes." Take all the minor characters, entangled and swept up in the "great cataclysm that symbolises their lives." The Strike. To quote Mr. Josephson: ". . . *Germinal* is the poem of a strike. The whole central portion of the book, deals with the assembling of the outraged miners in a forest at night, and their long procession consequently in a mob through one mining town after another, upon a career of vengeance and destruction. . . . All the moments in the life of this mob are stark and clear, from that in which the dying sunset throws "great lakes of blood" upon the flat plains behind them and upon their distorted faces, to that dreadful pause and silence which precedes the firing by the military guards upon the bare-fisted men and women." (Here is the Russian film.) In a letter to Henry Céard, Zola comments on *Germinal*: ". . . the truth is that this novel is a great fresco. Each chapter, each compartment of the composition is so closely packed that everything seems foreshortened. . . . In this design I had thought that the large movements expressed a thought sufficiently, in imposing themselves upon the mass of the crowd. My subject was the action and reciprocal reaction of the individual and the crowd, one upon the other. . . ."

Writing in 1928 on the descriptive power of Zola, I said: "He shows the big things with the little things taking place at one and the same time, in a filmic manner. In *La Débâcle*, that epic war novel, when I had read to the end of the part

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dealing with the battle of Sedan, I said, it is impossible, it is inconceivable to imagine anything written with more terrific feeling, more intensity, more strength of speech than this miserable disaster. But it is done cunningly by use of light and shade, by contrast of masses, by quiet and storm, until the climax comes with the burning of Paris and you are left with it ringing in your ears. I can remember no book that has aroused stronger emotions in me. It is brought about by a perfection of detail, by a subtle collection of small insignificant scenes, occupying possibly only the fraction of a second, but nevertheless of vital importance. The sticky tiles in the room of death in Weiss's house at Bazeilles; the broken gas-pipes that jetted fire in the streets of Paris; the smashed spectacles on Weiss's nose as the little man is shot against the wall of his house. Again, the crossing of the Meuse by night, the endless file of Cuirassiers emerging from the darkness of one bank and disappearing into that of the other; the neighing horses with their manes raised and their legs stiffened with fright; the men erect in their stirrups, uniformly draped in their long white cloaks, their helmets blazing with fiery reflections, looking like phantom horsemen with flaming hair. Later, when Silvine and Prosper look for the body of Honoré, the corpse-strewn battlefield, the charge of mad, riderless horses, neglected and hungry; the discovery of the laughing Zouaves, lying at their ease on the sofa outside a house. Silvine mistakes them for living soldiers, triumphant. In reality, they are propped up on their knapsacks with death grins on their faces. And seven men kneeling in one line, with their guns raised to their shoulders, shot dead whilst in the act of firing. . ."

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Zola the basis, the master of film scenario description, of the selection of detail for expressive purpose?

* * *

Zola composed his novels strictly according to plan, in fact, with such highly organized method that a comparison with the preparation of the film scenario is inevitable. Block by block, chapter by chapter, brick by brick, documenting and gathering material as he proceeded, Zola progressed from novel to novel in the building of the vast tower of the *Rougon-Macquart* series, twenty volumes in all. "*The Rougon-Macquart, natural and social history of a family under the Second Empire.*"

Firstly, he would select his theme, soliloquise over it, select his central character from the genealogical tree of the *Rougon-Macquart*, proceed to his summary plan, then through succeeding stages of a detailed plan, environment, notes of other characters, for all of which he amass a pile of documents. The whole of the preparatory work was elaborate and calculating. The final writing and assembling of the book Zola would call the "editing." "He goes at it calmly, methodically. He writes four manuscript pages every day, almost without crossing out a word," writes Paul Alexis. "There were three primary sources of information: books which related to the past; testimony, either through written books or conversation, by persons at hand or experts; and finally direct personal observation by himself, on the field of action." For each novel "he would surround himself with a whole library on the subject treated; he would have competent persons to talk with him, whenever they could be approached; he would travel, see the

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horizons of this subject, its people, its morals." All these documents were classified in folios, pigeonholed and labelled with great care, awaiting the assembly or editing. Zola called this system of documenting the constitution of a portfolio. It has its counterpart to-day in the efficient scenario-bureaux of the Soviet film industry.

It is impossible to make a film, write a novel, paint a canvas, unless the artist has absorbed the subject, the material, the people, the objects, the dialogue, the architecture, the atmosphere, the environment. For this reason there is nothing in contemporary life (as well as in the storehouse of the past) which should not be of interest to the film director. But the point must be stressed that Zola would always *reject* episodes or documents offered to him if they had no reason, if their logic did not enhance and strengthen his purpose.* This selection of material, which is a matter of intellect, experience, intelligence and creative impulsiveness, distinguishes the good film director from the bad. Genius lies in the application and the employment of the selected material for the expression of the idea, of the creative impulse. Zola refers to the business of documenting as simply the amusement of a mechanic directing the play of a thousand cog-wheels with meticulous care. But we must for ever be able to distinguish between mere recorded fact of documentary interest and the creative impulse that is the spring which builds such material into a work of art.

* c.f. Le Corbusier's maxim: "I shall find my clue in cold analysis. At each stage my duty will be to put the question: Why? Nothing has any right to exist which cannot give a precise answer."

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I think the popularity that Zola's books enjoyed, despite the antagonism in which the man was held, is of significance. All his novels sold in great numbers, creating records at that time for publishers. *Nana* reached many thousands; *L'Assommoir* reached the 100,000 mark in a few months. Zola was an astute showman. It was an age of learning, particularly among the lower classes and he believed rightly that great numbers of people enjoyed receiving information at a low cost about factories, department stores, the stock-exchange, the army, etc. It is only logical that the demand for information to-day is even greater, but it is for the cinema, with its great breadth and scope and far-reaching influence, to meet that demand. By such pictures as *The General Line*, *Turksib*, *Drifters*, *Finis Terræ*, *Moana*.

* * *

Thus there is much in modern cinema that was foreshadowed by the Naturalistic novel of Zola. Scientific method, the theory of environment, even scenario-organization and selection of detail is common to both forms of expression. Never, however, in making comparisons and drawing parallels must one confuse the literary outlook of the one with the cinematic outlook of the other. The strongest link between the Naturalism of the past and the Naturalism of the present is their joint aim, their ultimate end . . . Truth. Terms and labels are nothing. Zola, at the age of twenty, said to his friend Cézanne, "All art is one; spiritualist, realist are only words. . ."

I have taken liberties in snatching paragraphs from the book of Mr. Josephson. I feel, however, that there is so much to be learned from Zola to the gain of the *cinéaste* that

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the ravaging will be pardoned. Added to which, I gather that the author is unaware of the connection between his hero and the cinema, that he is unconscious of the service he has done in such careful analysis of the methods and working of the greatest of Naturalistic writers.

PAUL ROTH.

AS IS IN PARIS

In polyglot Paris in whose Boulevard cinemas sub-titles are projected both in English and French, a new "salle spécialisée" has made its appearance in which sound-films spoken entirely in English or American are presented. This salle is called the Cinéma du Panthéon and in its opening programme, the original American version of *The Love Parade* presented the opportunity of comparing the French with the American version, between which, I learnt, there is a very considerable difference.

The nature-film *Chez les Mangeurs d'Hommes* turned in the south seas by André Paul Antoine and Robert Lugeon, has broken all attendance records at the Cameo Cinema. It is certainly the most natural document of native life which has yet been made. There are definitely no real actors nor studio-shots to lend entertainment value. The photography is not constant, but these two Frenchmen, alone amongst cannibals and not knowing from day to day what the end of

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their film was going to be, had many hardships to face. Sound has in no way helped the film. The singing and talking of natives in a language which is unintelligible become eventually monotonous. It is certainly daring and very genuine and its success is a proof that the French public, at any rate, need not be continuously spoon-fed with misrepresented entertainment value in the form of cabaret scenes.

Vieux Colombier has concluded the run of *Menschen am Sonntag*, which was quite mildly received by the French critics. I consider it an excellent film not fully understood in France and which will without doubt be severely though unnecessarily cut in England. The film gives out more than was put into it. It is more than a documentaire of five young workers; many sequences typify German customs and above all German temperament. No one seems to have mentioned the brilliant photography of Schüfftan—carefully chosen “stills” from this film could, I feel sure, successfully fill one of those modern Parisian photo books. Vieux Colombier are now exclusively presenting Jean Epstein's latest film *Mor-Vran*, but having only seen the “stills” from this film which appears to be of the *Finis Terrae* genre, a criticism must await a later article.

Before terminating for the season, all the groups presented their final programmes. Group l'Effort paid homage to that grand old man of the Cinema, Georges Méliés, who in an informal speech amused us with stories of the pioneering days. *Voyage to the Moon*, known throughout the world as the first long film employing cinema tricks, was presented and followed by *Juif Errant*, the first film making use of superimposition and artificial thunderstorm effects; and

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lastly the coloured film *400 Coups du Diable*, which includes a performance of the box-trick done in record time, establishes Georges Méliés as a real pioneer of the world's cinematography. The same programme fêted the twentieth anniversary of the coronation of King George V by presenting a coloured film of the 1910 ceremonies in India, accompanied by a gramophone record of *God Save the King* repeated about twenty-five times! In contrast to these very old films, a representative 1930 studio programme was presented. The only really new film in this group was a montage-film of a Russian village, a short essay by Léonide Moguilevsky. From the very first pictures, I was reminded of the *General Line* and I learnt afterwards that the film is actually a montage from *General Line*, although this was not announced in order that the film, which is no more than a pretty pastoral elegy, should not be banned by the Censor who has instructions at present to ban everything Sovietic. It was interesting to view these pictures which are as beautiful as in Eisenstein's film and yet which lack the force which he only put into them.

In the Tribune Libre's Cavalcanti evening, we saw for the first time extracts from *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, which however did not give a very clear idea of the possibilities of this film. It was nevertheless glorious to see that curious picture of white Hessling on a black horse (see *Close Up*, February, 1930) come to life. Hessling has been given great scope to portray her oddities, and there is one magnificent piece of cinema when she, clinging to a wind-mill, revolves in the air. The last programme of the Tribune Libre's season was devoted to amateur films. Mr. Jacques Henri-

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Robert stressed the point that amateur films were mere "distraction" and were never intended to be compared with the commercial cinema. He next projected a number of short documentaires in which he had not attempted to produce anything beyond the limited means at his disposal and which were in consequence spirited and amusing. His next film *Cruautés* made in 1927 appears to-day a little banal. These were 9mm. films perfectly projected upon a screen sufficiently large to be viewed by 500 persons, by means of a special projector entirely built by Mr. Henri-Robert himself. We next had the long 16mm. film *J'avais un fidèle amant* by Francis Winter and Robert de Ribon. There are such perfect moments in this film that one entirely forgets that it has been made on sub-standard stock by amateurs. Most of the young French critics and makers of inferior standard-size documentaires did not acknowledge the beauty of this film, which if copied upon 35mm. stock and given adequate publicity would undoubtedly achieve a great success. Mr. Charles de Saint-Cyr, one of the justest of cinema critics wrote à propos of this film in *La Semaine à Paris* :—

"Quoi ! voilà deux amateurs et ils montrent plus d'intensité et tout à la fois de vérité que la plupart des gens de métier. Le sujet du film était un de ceux qui demandent sensibilité, goût, mesure, intelligence. Deux "promis" aux champs : une gardeuse de moutons et un jeune gars un peu naïf. Une affiche qu'ils rencontrent vante les engagements coloniaux, et voici le gars qui s'engage. La vie continue. Cette notion du temps qui, à la campagne, ne compte pas, est suggérée de la plus admirable façon. Au bout de sept

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ans, il revient; ils s'épouseront. Tout cela sur un rythme de veille chanson avec infiniment de poésie. Mais les auteurs ne s'en sont pas tenus à cette poésie; leurs images sont d'une perfection qui les égale aux meilleurs réalisateurs professionnels. On s'extasie sur les films russes, souvent l'on a raison; or, le film de MM. Winter et de Ribon ne leur est pas inférieur. Trop souvent, dans les films russes alternent de belles images et des calembredaines de propagande d'une sombre sottise. MM. Winter et de Ribon s'en sont tenus aux belles images. Leur film est une oeuvre fort noble. Je souhaiterais qu'elle pût être projetée à un large public. Ce serait preuve encore que le cinéma français vaut infiniment plus que ne prétendent certains intéressés dont bon nombre d'ailleurs des soviétisants de la plus pitoyable sorte."

The film is worthy of the space devoted to it here, and I admittedly prefer to quote M. de Saint-Cyr, an old man, rather than be considered over enthusiastic for amateur possibilities. At the conclusion of the séance, a jeune complaining of the lack of novelty in these amateur films, projected his surrealist production *Lait de Rose*, in which white roses float across the screen, castles are built from lumps of sugar and cream pours out of a telephone mouthpiece.

Attracted by an advertisement, I visited recently the Galerie de France and was most impressed by the designs by Boris Bilinsky for the décors and costumes of twelve films. His paintings are very colourful and where they are not always of the simplicity desired for perfect cinema one must realize that Bilinsky—even less than film-producers themselves—is not allowed the artistic

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freedom he deserves. Amongst ten "projets cinégraphiques" he exhibited two simplified sets of such design and colour as to be directly adaptable to the screen. The German straight line new simplicity appears to have influenced Bilinsky more than the French adoption of curves. There are some fantastic visions for a film *1975* which was conceived by Ivan Mosjoukine in 1924, but remained unturned. The original designs for *Shéhérazade* are admirably executed, and the costumes for the Ufa film *Le Diable Blanc* subtly convey an 1850 epoch. Bilinsky has designed the costumes for *Tarakanova*, produced by R. Bernard and at present being presented at Paris, and for once his valuable work has been acknowledged by his name being announced together with that of the producer and actors. Allowed freedom, Bilinsky could produce marvels, especially in simplicity, but he explained to me that when he designed, for example, a bare wall to give a certain effect, the producer would demand the addition of a banal picture to lend "that necessary atmosphere of warmth." Bilinsky in designing his décors considers lighting and camera-angle, but he maintains that the chief principle of lighting most films is to make the picture as bright as possible and consequently the atmosphere produced by the lights and shades in his original sketches is almost invariably lost. Bilinsky's contribution to Cinema is already extremely valuable and it is shameful that his name should remain in comparative oblivion owing to the prevailing system of booming "stars" only.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

The photographs illustrating Boris Bilinsky's work were kindly presented by the Galerie de France, Paris.

TELECINEMA

The mountains of criticism are in labour for a ridiculous mouse.

Or :

One little exhibitor went to market and all the others stayed at home.

When will we become alive to what is going on around us ?

Chaffering about trade values of wide screens, we ignore developments which seriously threaten our megalomania. Say what we like (and most of us have little to say on the subject) television is spelt T E L E VISION.

The London Television Society (founded on September 7, 1927) reports a membership of six hundred. This membership, moreover, represents the imaginative; experiments are conducted in chemical, mechanical and electrical components. Daventry devotes half an hour, for five mornings of the week, to television; and half an hour for two evenings.

TeleVISION means more than talkies by the fireside : and it means that, too.

It means a new medium in which stage and screen will be happily commingled. (To-day voices are broadcast with mechanized, sound background.)

Besides making film renters and theatre owners caper. . . .

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When films started to be, intelligent people were unaware of anything but their petti-fogging intelligence. The present baneful group found inalienable jobs. Radio proved that some had profited by experience. Modern music IS broadcast and experimental plays. Television should find all the right people in at the start. It will do for entertainment what the revolution did for Russian films.

It means modern films will reach the public.

Glancing at achievement till now:

First demonstration of television by J. L. Baird was given before members of the Royal Institute on January 27th, 1926; the head of a ventriloquist's doll being transmitted from one room to another. Prior to this performance only the electrical transmission of silhouettes had been achieved. In the same year Baird discovered Noctovision, that is the utilisation of infra-red rays for the transmission of television signals. An image of a person seated in total darkness could be televised by this method, while the infra-red rays were able to penetrate fog or dense mist. Phonovision, also evolved by Baird, enabled scientists to store the image sound.

Distance, early bugbear, was conquered by Baird in 1928; the image of a well known personality being sent from a London laboratory in Long Acre to Hartsdale, a suburb of New York, where it was immediately recognized. Next, the image of a young lady was televised to her fiancé on board the *Berengaria* in mid-Atlantic. Stereoscopic and colour television quickly followed.

Critics declared that television was uncommercial, as a special wave-length was necessary for synchronism. Baird (on March 5th, 1929) controverted critics by using the broad-

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casting facilities for a demonstration of self-synchronised television. He added the triumph of transmitting in daylight.

Jenkins in America, Belin and Holweek in France, and Mihaly in Germany have done empirical work.

Transmitting of film. Postage stamp effects, chiefly.

Before transmission of film remaining moments might be snatched for sporadic education. (Authorities promise film soon.) Straight television may mean more than seeing a face in a crowd on Armistice Day. An eclipse, say, could be televised all over the world; a work of art made familiar to all students. (This is only fair to teleV. as so many films of a purported future have shown base uses of visual broadcasting.)

Fundamentals are, possibly, abstruse. To fathom depths with a few words abridgements can be plucked from *Television*, the excellent review.

Suppose the sitter is placed in front of a scanning disc with small holes in it arranged equidistantly along an equiangular spiral of one complete turn. In the disc there are thirty holes. An electric motor rotates uniformly the disc at not less than sixteen revolutions per second. The disc is placed in the path of a beam of light. Now a perforated disc, rotating before a fixed light source, illuminates the face of the sitter with a travelling spot of light, so that the features are sub-divided into narrow light strips. Photo-electric cells are influenced by the picked up light; current pulsations are broadcast. The varying current is translated into varying light by a glow, neon tube. A spiral-hole disc runs, exactly in step with the disc at the sending station, in front of the neon tube.

At the moment of writing definition can be obtained with

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heads and busts, although a small image can be formed of a large object and this image scanned. This has been done with the greyhound races. The size of the image varies with the size of the scanning disc.

Under the existing conditions the best films for televising would appear to be absolutes dealing with masses of light and shade and specially contrived features of the "hand and feet" order. Defects will vanish when the unfortunate regulation of wave bands is altered for England. Newspaper print has been transmitted by employing a scanning disc with sixty holes. And televised news goes round the world seven times in one second!

It is steady to remember that picture telegraphy, another Baird invention, is now widely used.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

STAR

Whence comes the mimic art of Irving Booth? Who has taught him to impersonate with such consummate perfection the Sheik, the naughty French Count, the Russian, the Clown with the Broken Heart? What school of art or of life has initiated him into the secret of giving to each of his many varied roles the touch that makes them kin with nature, to suit the action to the words, (he is in the talkies now), the

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words to the action? . . . Weaker masters of the craft may out-herod Herod and tear a passion to tatters on the stage, but not Irving Booth, "the actor, who," in the words of a press-agent, "wields the power to sway the emotions of millions." He has a technique all his own, developed no one knows when, where nor how, but it is unmistakable, recognizable at a glance by the lovers of his art, like a trademark on a bar of soap or a gramophone. Observe the subtlety with which he handles a delicate, dramatic situation, the ease with which his face, his whole body, like some trained instruments, express jealousy, anger, affection!

It matters little what the plot is or where it is laid. *His* public knows exactly what Irving Booth will do in all situations. Is he called upon to give vent to the conflict of emotions rending the bosom of a betrayed husband? He shall not be found wanting. Indeed, when the supreme moment of agony arrives and the deceived lover in the familiar "eternal triangle" remains alone on the stage to wrestle with his burden, a hush, a silence of anticipation falls upon the audience as the master with a practiced gesture inserts two fingers between his celluloid collar and his neck, moving his head from side to side as if in an effort to free himself from the intolerable yoke of a too closely fitting collar. This classic gesture richly symbolic of emotional stress and copied, no doubt, because of its fidelity to nature by all the cinema actors of the Irving Booth school must forever remain a living contribution to the art of acting.

Nor is this all. When the vampire (so inimitably portrayed by Rosa del Oro), the falsest of false wives tries to

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seduce a heart-broken husband by a langorous embrace promising keener pleasures, the stage lover is never at a loss for an action suitable to the occasion. The public is not disappointed in its expectations. With a deft movement of the left hand he disengages her arms from his neck and with another equally deft stroke he violently throws the woman to the ground where she is left crouching and squirming, a prey to a guilty conscience, while *he*, "consumed by the struggling passions within his breast," as a shrewd critic remarks, "makes his triumphant exit."

The mirror thus held up to nature by Irving Booth and his "school" evidently reflects such a universal life-likeness that no matter whether it is the jealousy of a sheik, an Othello, a Middle West business man, a Chicago gunman, or a Russian nobleman, the task of translating their varied soul-struggles into dramatic action is reduced to the common international denominator of "the celluloid collar gesture" and the "cast her down to the ground" movement. To the cinema actor must be awarded the palm of discovering the few facial and bodily gestures by which the whole gamut of human emotion from the lowest note to the top of the compass may be registered by the simplest of means. Nor is the dear public ungrateful for this standardization of the dramatic art by which the secret motions of the soul may be divined at a glance, as the worship of Irving Booth and his clan by all the kitchen maids and their soul mates amply testifies.

The soulful kiss which serves as the denouement of all the plays of passion (and what cinema plays treat of anything but passion?) is perhaps the subtlest and the last of the inventions

which together with the two gestures described above forms the whole stock-in-trade of the Irving Booth "school."

To the curious who are looking for "sources" a knowledge of Irving Booth's past will reveal but little on which to base a prophecy or a moral. Neither at school nor in his early youth at the soda fountain did he display those brilliant qualities which later made him "the talk of two continents." For the theatre and the drama as an art the youth showed none of that warmth of feeling or enthusiasm which would explain his future success. Nor does his contempt for amateur theatricals which he classed with cheap buffoonery help us to discover a clue to the mystery. The suggestion is here made for what it is worth that perhaps the fabulous salaries and ease of life of the movie stars may have turned the ambitious youth's mind towards the promised land. Self-confidence he never lacked and frequent attendance at the movie shows convinced him that no training or ability of any kind were necessary for the prospective actor. It was the general opinion of critics that the actor's forte lay in his clothes and his appearance. "Personality," "it" referred to the manner of wearing clothes. Here too critical opinion was divided between those who regarded certain favourites as showing to best advantage their "personality" in evening clothes and others who preferred the sheik's outfit. For the rest, the future aspirant to the stage felt himself as attractive physically and as developed mentally as his more lucky confreres.

"I don't care," said the super-producer, Silverspan, "whether this fellow can act or not; that's what I've got

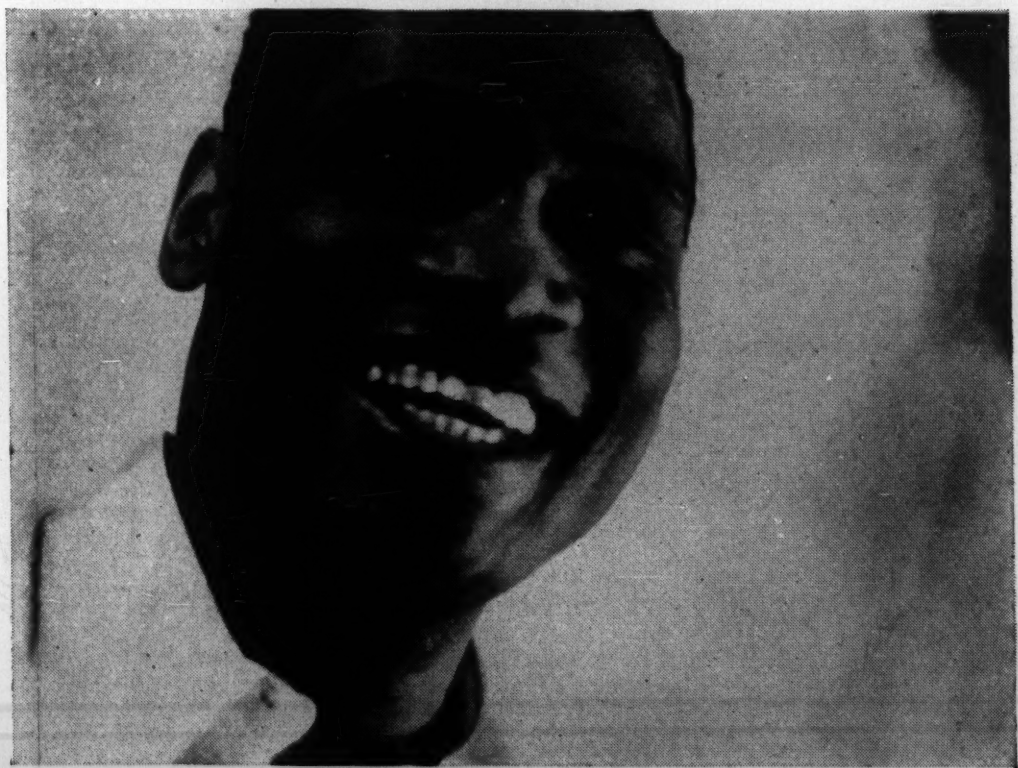


Two interesting studies from the cultural film, *The Michurinsky Nursery Garden*. See article elsewhere in this issue. I. V. Michurin is experimenting in producing fruit trees and vegetables able to withstand the cold climate of northern Russia. Although this is a film that must contain much of interest, it is doubtful if we shall see it in England, for it actually shows the crossing of a wild with a cultivated peach to obtain the hybrid of an almond, which is crossed again with the hybrid of a peach to obtain a frost-resisting almond, and this no doubt, will be considered dangerous propaganda that might affect adversely the morals of British fruit trees.





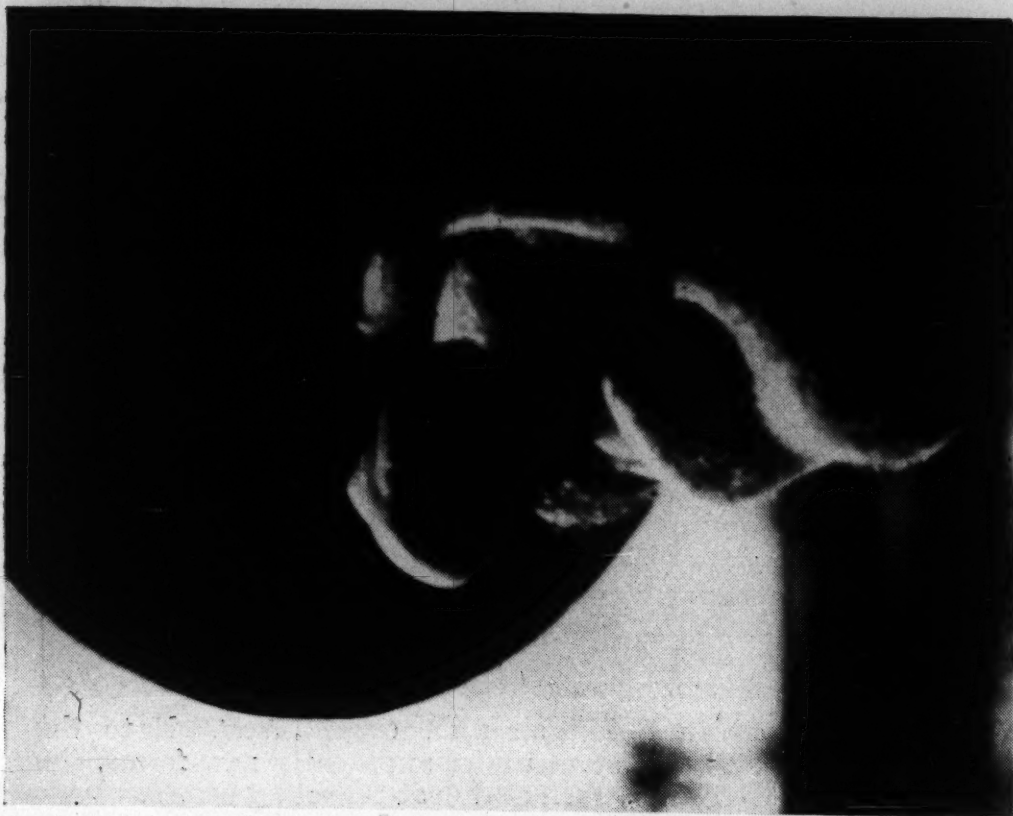
Gavin Arthur in *Borderline*, a Pool film, directed by
Kenneth Macpherson.



Paul Robeson as Pete, in the same film.



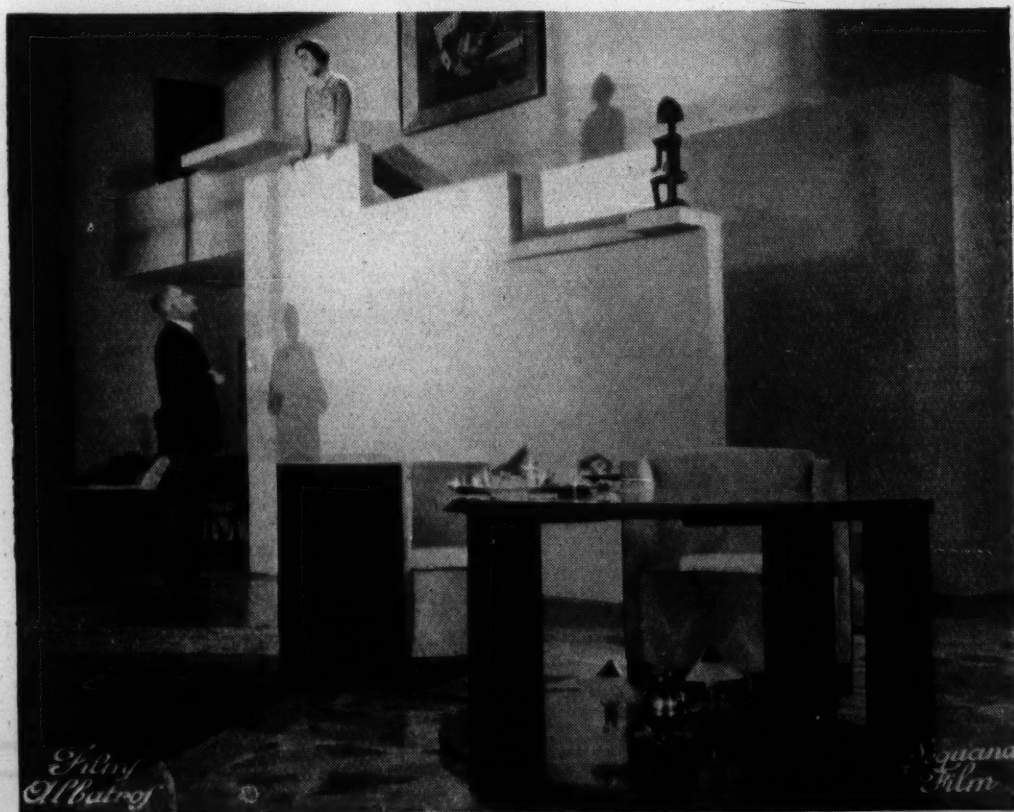
Another study of Paul Robeson, reminiscent of early Egyptian carving, in the quality of light and shade.



A close up from a French experimental film, *Carnaval de Nice*.



Modernistic furniture in a British film, *Greek Street*. Note the Victorian fussiness still persistent under apparently new forms, the oval on the wall, the screen and dust collecting ledges.

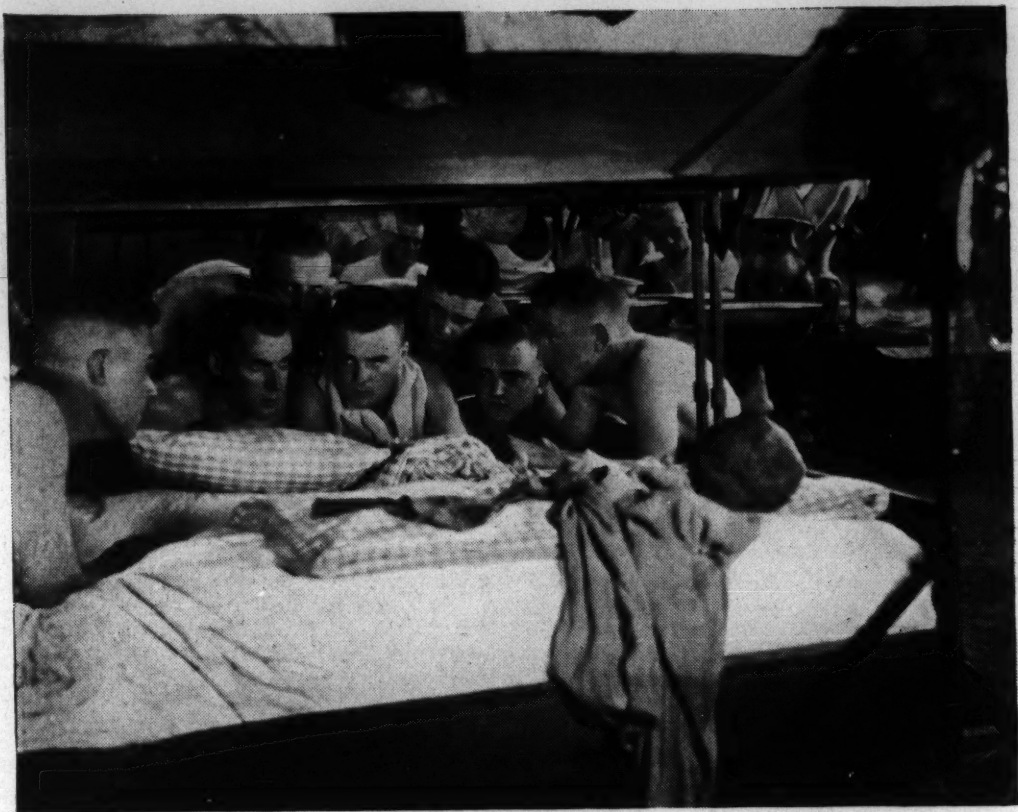


A modern set from *Les Nouveaux Messieurs*. Contrasted with the still above, its inviting restfulness is achieved by extreme simplicity, and not by multiplication of details. It will be comfortable to live in, and easily kept in order.



Two more sets from *Greek Street*, settings arranged by Andrew L. Mazzei. Notice again the Victorian rose effect of light and the flutings and general air of frilliness. How difficult too it would be to lift the heavy fur rug from under the dressing table when the room was to be cleaned.

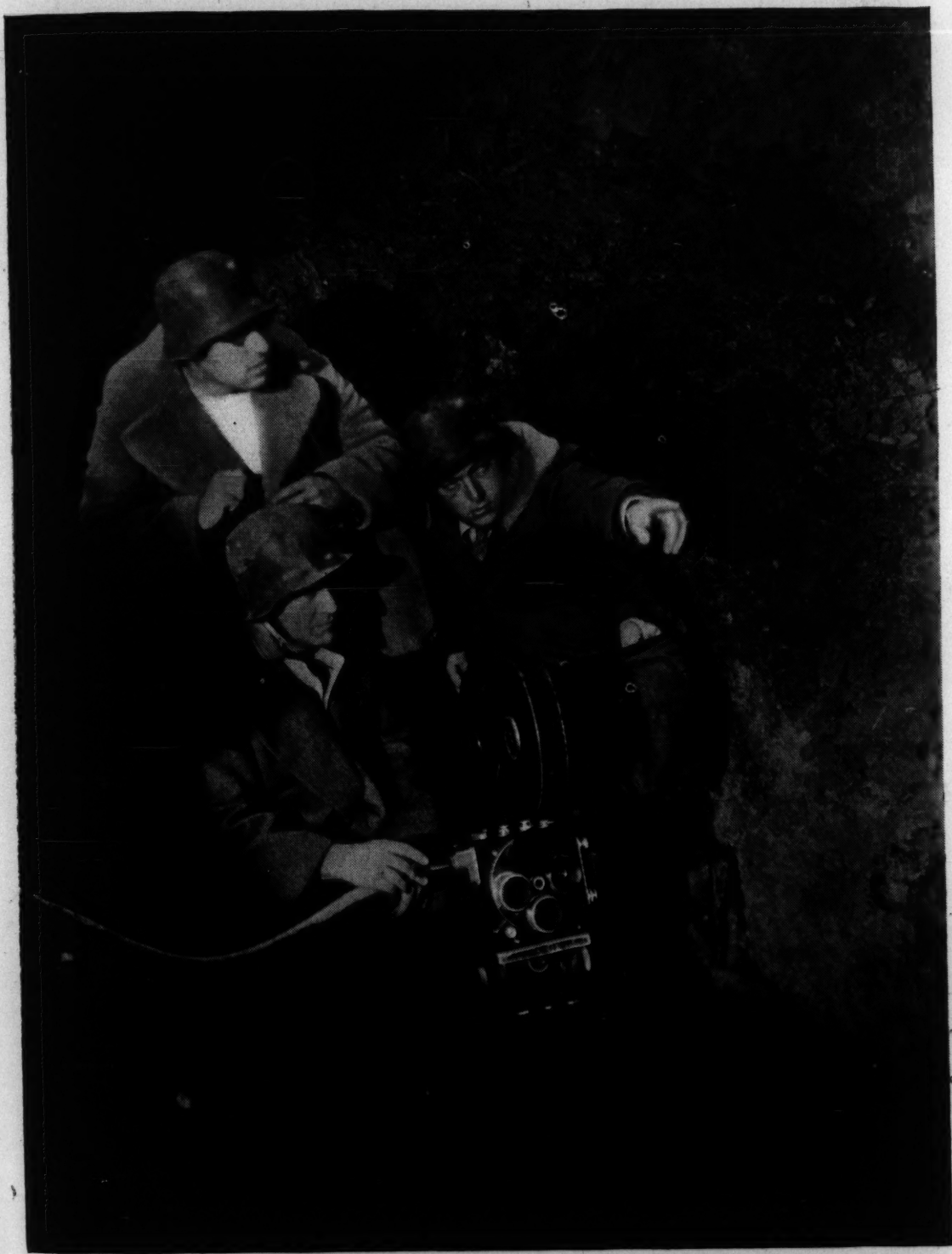




The recruits in Universal's film of *All Quiet on the Western Front*.



The recruits training in *All Quiet on the Western Front*.



All Quiet on the Western Front in the making.



From the new Ufatone picture, *Murder for Sale*. Above microphones, cameras and lamps in action. Below, the scene with Lilian Harvey, as it will appear in the film.



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directors for. "The young fellow has a face and a figure that'll please the ladies in my audience; that's enough for me. To my mind, the dumber the actor, the better. I will get my press gang to write him up, and before he is seen in his first play the public's mouth will water. Advertising is the secret. People believe anything printed if it's repeated long enough."

It was also Silverspan's far-seeing mind that ordered the christening of the new-born actor. "Half of the game is in the name," was the master's famous saying. "Now Irving used to be a great actor in the old days," he said to his director, "and Booth was another great actor. We can do better than that by calling this fellow 'Irving Booth'; half of the public will think that those actors are still living. . . ."

"Gee," the youth spoke up boldly, "with a name like this who wouldn't get up to the top?"

How the Irving Booth school will surmount the difficulties of the "talkie" problem is not hard to guess. The same spirit which embodied the best of the art of mimicry in their "dumb" acting will now perform similar service for them on the speaking stage. It is true that most of the actors have neither trained voices nor any knowledge of diction, but these trifles do not seem to bother them much the nonce. Once Demosthenes stood by the sea with his mouth full of dirt and practiced the speaking art; this "dirt" treatment has not yet been discovered by the talkie actors who speak with an accent which is neither that of Christian, pagan, nor man.

Some light on the career of Irving Booth and his rise in the cinema world was shed lately by himself in a speech he had

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made before a crowd assembled to greet him on the return to his native city which now claims him among her illustrious sons.

"Friends," he began his speech, "your reception is not a tribute to me, it is a tribute to my art." He tasted the nectar of his own words and it went to his head.

"Friends," he continued after the applause died down, "if I stand before you today a success in my line, I'll tell you how I did it. It was first of all my mother. (Impressive pause and visible emotion in the large audience), and secondly my teachers. I started at the bottom, as you all know, delivering newspapers, (a chorus of 'you bet's'). Now you know that I hate to brag, but you know from the papers that I'm getting more good American dollars per week than the whole school faculty put together. ('Atta boy' chorus). My old man wanted me to learn 'an honest trade,' but I beat it out of town to make that Hollywood train on the way to success. ('You made it, too' chorus). Well, ladies and gents, I'm not much of a talker, but if you ever visit the old burg, come and see me. Just ask for plain Irving Booth and the cops will show."

The last words were drowned in the din of the ecstatic crowd.

MICHAEL STUART.

SHADOW OVER HOLLYWOOD

An ominous shadow lies athwart Hollywood. So far it has escaped the attention of the general public. But Hollywood itself, as personified by the producers, is very definitely and most uncomfortably aware of it. Amid a clashing of cymbals, the high priest of filmdom recently promulgated a code of cinema morals, under which the lid is to be clamped down on all vulgarity, naughtiness, brutality, suggestiveness, ridicule and much else that has heretofore speckled the films or given them character. And the world at large, while not knowing what to make of it, has assumed that through some inner conviction Hollywood has voluntarily gone puritan. In reality, however, this gesture of virtue—this self-imposed censorship—has a far more serious and logical significance. It is a tactical effort on the part of Hollywood to forestall a menace that is threatening the very life of the picture industry—national censorship.

Unknown to the busy world absorbed in its own affairs, there is a bill pending in Congress that has for its object the placing of Hollywood directly under the jurisdiction of the United States Government. It provides for the creation of a Federal Motion-Picture Commission, to be composed of five men and four women, empowered not only to censor all films

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but also to supervise their production and regulate their distribution and exhibition. In brief, to quote directly from the proposed law, "The motion-picture industry is hereby declared to be a public utility"; and upon this broad, comprehensive foundation the bill now under consideration by a Congressional committee builds up a code of regulations, provisions and prohibitions which would virtually make Hollywood a mere servant of the Commission and subject to heavy and ruinous penalties for any infractions of its censorial authority.

Initially the contemplated law concerns itself with contracts, leases, and distribution; forbidding methods in restraint of trade, compelling free competition among producers and exhibitors, and, in general, paternally regulating the entire film trade. But that which outstandingly characterizes the pending statute, is its drastic censorship provision, whereby no less than twenty subjects or types of stories and scenes are specifically placed under the ban. These include sex appeal, vice, illicit love, adultery, drug addiction, underworld episodes, crime, brutality, bloodshed, violence, vulgarity, bedroom scenes, religious, racial or governmental partisanship, ridicule of national manners or customs, prolonged expressions of love or any other form of sex suggestiveness, as well as the use of suggestive, profane or improper language in the mouths of the actors.

All in all, the list of taboos closely parallels that of the Will Hays code, thus confirming the suggestion that this Hollywood voluntary code of prohibitions has been prepared and put into effect for the direct purpose of averting the enactment of the pending Congressional measure; or, in other words, of

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taking the wind out of the sails of its bigoted proponents. It is a bit of strategy full worthy of Will Hay's generalship. How well or to what extent it will succeed remains to be seen; and in the meantime Hollywood may well hold its breath.

The threatened law does not content itself with the mere listing of forbidden subjects and providing penalties for the violation of what it defines as "standards of production." It requires also, that every picture shall be produced under the personal supervision of a representative of the Commission. Which means, not only that every Hollywood studio will have a Government official installed in it, but also that no picture can be put into production until the very scenario itself has been viséed.

Where this direct supervision is impracticable, as in the case of travel pictures or current-news reels, the producer or owner of every such film must file a bond with the Commission in the sum of fifty thousand dollars, as surety against any infraction of the law's standards of production. And these standards, by the way, also include a prohibition against the showing of any film that may be construed as favouring or opposing a political candidate or as reflecting upon a public official or any governmental administration.

No producer or exhibitor may carry on his business without first formally registering with the Commission; and no picture may be released until it has been passed upon and approved by one or more of the commissioners in person and has received a specific permit; which permit, in the form of an official label, must be exhibited on the screen at every showing, under penalty of heavy fine in addition to confiscation of the film. Furthermore, this permit cannot be obtained without the pay-

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ment in each instance of a fee, which is fixed at \$10 for each thousand feet of the original film and \$5 in the case of each additional print.

The Commission may at any time recall a licenced film, and, after review, revoke it on the ground that it violates the established standards of production. More than that, even after a film has been duly licensed and the Commission itself finds no subsequent objection to it, it may be withdrawn from exhibition if any three persons, whoever and wherever they may be, shall file an appeal against it.

Which is to say, by way of illustration, that if three members of the Prudent Prudes Society of Pruneville should consider their virtue imperilled at sight of Greta Garbo's knee, they may by a ten-word telegram of protest to Washington stop the showing of the offending picture everywhere through the entire country. And until their protests shall be acted upon by the Commission, however long a time it may involve, the film must remain in limbo; and should the Commissioners agree with the Prudent Prudes, it may never again be put into circulation.

Not satisfied with supervising, censoring and regulating the production, distribution and showing of films, the contemplated law extends the Commission's right of censorship to all advertising of motion pictures, whether on billboards or in newspapers or magazines. And if in the judgment of the Commission any such advertisement or notice is misleading in its statements or contains any illustrations or wording contrary to film standards of production, the producer of the picture in question shall have his license revoked, "even

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though such unlawful advertising has been done without the knowledge or consent of the owner of such film."

Penalties for violating the law or such orders as the Commission may issue, run from fines of five hundred to ten thousand dollars, and imprisonment from six months to five years. And each day during which any infraction of the law or disobedience of official orders shall continue will be regarded as a separate offense. Also, the film involved in the offence shall be confiscated and destroyed.

This, in very brief outline, presents the leading features of the national censorship bill now before Congress. Its arbitrary, Czaristic, and fantastically irrational provisions would seem on the face of it to preclude the possibility of any serious legislative consideration of it. But in view of the fact that personal investigation reveals that the measure is being actively supported by parent-teacher associations and other like organizations zealously pledged to moral reforms and pietistic ideals, the matter can neither be ignored nor laughed at as of no moment. It is all too emphatically a serious expression of that militant, determined element of bigotry which is ever seeking to impose its benighted puritanism upon a normal, self-expressive world. And while this proposed censorship law may possibly have no chance for enactment in its present drastic, inquisitorial form, its portent is nevertheless sufficiently substantial to cast a menacing shadow and to call for alert, defensive action.

CLIFFORD HOWARD.

THE WHITEMAN FRONT

Two articles in one. On two films. One article, because, poles apart, they both have something of the same thing (As poles do - ice, for instance). Size. Scope. So without being smart, without any more puns on that all-too-punned-on title, *All Quiet* and *The King of Jazz* together. Revue and war film which both mean something, some one thing. As well as size and scope.

I had been getting worried about talkies. I had been getting awfully worried. I have been getting awfully tired of people saying to me "What a pity it is about the Avenue Pavilion," and "There are so many good silent films we haven't seen. Can't you do something about it?" What could I do, and what do I want to do? I'll see the good silent films I haven't seen. I'd like a theatre where I could see them. But that's not the main issue. That's not working. It's marking time. Sound's marvellous, malleable, rich. We are lucky to have it. Cinema's wonderful and workable. We have it. We don't understand it, but we have it. We ought to understand it. But when sound comes along, as Bébé Daniels says (or doesn't she?) we've got to take awful pains to understand that, too. Sound only means we have got to understand cinema more than ever. We have got to take awful

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pains. Honest pains. Good job of work. Just as much getting down to it and all that as in coping with single cinema (honestly). Because dual sound-and-light cinema has to be something different, and if you don't understand single cinema first, it can't be. And I'm not so interested in "seeing the good silent films" that have been made, because after all they have been made, and good talkies haven't been.

I was getting awfully worried about talkies. They weren't doing anything. They were standing just as still as those who lament over silent cinema. Supposing when Pabst made *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* he had said "Man against the mountains. Sheer man against sheer mountain. I won't have mechanics spoiling Nature,"—then we shouldn't have had that most breath-taking, life-giving aeroplane sequence. And that's what I mean about refusing sound.

On the other hand what's the use of accepting it if nothing is done with it? What is the use of the pioneer *Movietone Follies of 1929* if all the *Movietone Follies of 1930* do is to take a Cook's tour down the same, still unexplored paths? I hated the thought of *All Quiet* after I had seen *Sergeant Grischa*. True, I never succeeded in reading the book, but we have no proof that Hollywood makes better films the better the subject, indeed quite the reverse. And I went to *All Quiet*, and I saw not only all the other war-films there have ever been (with the exception of the official Battle of Arras and some German official stuff) wiped out and collected and summarised in *All Quiet*, but a new kind of film, a real talkie. Made, too, by Universal in Hollywood. Quite remarkable.

What is so remarkable about *All Quiet* is that it isn't good, like so many American films, by accident. From the very first

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shot it means to be. From the very first shot you feel the man knows what he is at. Lewis Milestone is a Russian. Troops going away, marching off. Women rose-flinging. How women have ruined roses—gallicised them. One woman, in far away 1914 dress, walking backwards as she waves to the soldiers. Why do we notice her? We are meant to. She's 'composition'; but she shows the man knows what he wants. The soldiers march by a classroom. Seen through two windows. Between the windows there is the blackboard and the schoolmaster. Sitting in the back row, we see the boys and the master and the troops behind. The master speaks, old-school stuff, about war. Of course it wasn't old-school then, it was the accepted thing. But the boys are bewildered at first. All this about their country in danger hadn't occurred to them. The old man's words draw them in slowly. They are slowly sucked in, till they rush out, believing of their own accord, throwing books in the air, and march by the windows, where the troops have marched by.

Training is hell. Petty reasonless bad treatment. Perhaps it isn't reasonless, it is making soldiers of them. But young, still spirited, they take revenge on their sergeant who ruins their last day's leave for them. Stretch a cord between the trees, drop a sheet on him, leave him in the mud. The war isn't hell so much as peculiar at first. They arrive. Older soldiers. No notice taken of them. They are fighting for their country, their country called them. It doesn't seem to take any notice of them. "When do we eat?" says one of them. The older soldiers laugh. Their efforts, as soldiers, the efforts they were going to turn into other things, are directed mostly at getting food. One of the minor themes

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of this film is the importance of food. War turns men into machines, but men have to get food in order to keep going, and food is hard and uncertain to get. Wolheim is very good as the old soldier. At first too boisterous, a bit too much of the "cockney spirit in the war," but that wears off or else it falls into place, and he is good with the new soldiers at their first shelling—and very good when one of them, blinded, goes staggering and screaming about No Man's Land, and is got, and one of them rushes out to bring them in. "Don't you ever do that again," say Katczinsky. He was one of us, a friend, says the young man. He is now a corpse to Katczinsky, and living men mustn't foolishly risk their lives for corpses. The first lesson. War ceases to be peculiar.

War is accepted—as hell. A hell of waiting. Waiting for food. Waiting in a dug-out while a bombardment goes on overhead. The awful effect of sand or earth dripping through at each fresh crash is right. Waiting while someone goes mad. And while others rush out. *All Quiet* is the first film I know where the screams of a man going mad are there, quite barely. And an attack and advance through a churchyard with graves shattered, crosses tumbling, as incidentals. You notice these things as incidentals, they slip into your mind; they would be unbearable if they were flung at your mind. But because the film gives you the big thing, the attack, the screaming and the going mad and the legs off slip in and make their effect because the mind isn't numbed by just sheer horror. Give the mind only horror and it is numbed and won't accept it. Give Dryer this, and we wouldn't have accepted it. Joan's agony was only incidental to her career, Dryer gave us only the agony (en gros plan, too) and

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we said, this isn't Joan, there is more, she had more. We thought of the more there was and denied the horror.

That is why this film is so successful a re-creating of the book. The things you remember, Muller's boots, the French girls, the double rations at the beginning of the book are there, as incidentals, as they were in the book. But because the film sweeps on, with the seven boys being slowly destroyed, because it is dealing with something bigger, these things, boots and blindness, occur, get one and surprise one; "So this is there, too" one says. This means one is surprised because one is being given some big thing else, and these have slipped in in building it up. Size, scope. But also proportion as well. A remarkable film.

Mind in it, too. Not only a hard photography which gives the replicas of trench and shell-struck villages a reality we had thought never to find again, even in real villages and trenches; not only a use of mass and rhythm and all that. But sequences in which the rhythm is cerebral. The boys visit Muller in hospital, in a church that has been made a hospital. His boots have always been noticed. His leg has been amputated. Being now a soldier, it is natural, it is what we all feel . . . he won't want his boots any more, says one of them. Baumer says, ssh, don't let him know. But they are young; they are careful too late, Muller has noticed. He screams. The others leave.

Baumer stays on, and Muller dies. Muller dies among hundreds of other beds in the church, and Baumer can't find a doctor to come. The orderly says there have been many amputations to-day; which one is he talking about? And Baumer doesn't scream out heroics about he is my friend, he

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is dying, you cannot let a young man die. He knows they can. He knows they have to. He accepts the orderly as part of something. Muller's death, too, as part of something. And he does not forget the boots. I don't know why, but in this scene, one gets the smell of anaesthetics somehow. It maybe that the whiteness of the beds, oddly in a church, quicken one's nerves, but one gets it, and when Baumer, carrying the boots, comes out of the church and looks round, we feel the fineness of the day. Milestone has got over here the boy's feelings that he has seen someone die, his dim surprise at life going on, outside all the people moving, and then the boy's quick desperate welcome of the fact that he is still living, life is yours till it goes, his steps quicken, he runs and runs and arrives back . . . and has to say, Muller is dead, here are the boots.

The sequence of going on leave is not so successful as this or the swim over the river; just as the scene in the shell-hole with the bayoneted Frenchman does not come off, as the Dying Room one does. I think this is because Lewis Ayres, who plays Baumer, isn't strong enough to carry scenes by himself. In the Dying Room and the river he has help, but the other two depend largely on him and he doesn't bring them off. Leave is ruined, anyway, by Beryl Mercer being the mother, and her face and voice have such an unwholesome absorbent sickliness that you cannot forget *Medals*. I think Zasu Pitts had this part, but the Mercer woman had such a success in the Barrie-bilge that she was substituted.

Now, this is a sound-film as well as a war-film, and the sound is good. It can be studied again and again. No small point is that the shells, etc., are possible to listen to. One

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does not leap out of one's seat, as one did when the bomb exploded in *Submarine*. But more important is this. There is dialogue. The men talk. But the men don't talk all the time. There is no set conversation as there was in *Journey's End*, so that one wondered why the indispensable Stanhope could be spared so long from the attack. The men talk where they happen to be and as they happen to have time. And when bombardment or duty stops them talking, they go on thinking, and that is preserved. So the dialogue takes its place, not only, for the first time on a large scale, with the other sounds of all kinds, but also with all the other mounting of the film. The mounting is quite good; witness the machine-gun. The film has at once a freedom and a form new to talkies. It has a scope and size new to war-films. It is on at the Regal and Alhambra in London simultaneously.

It is as good a version of *All Quiet* as we need. But being so good a film, having said it is, as a film, good, I can say what it deals with and why we want no more. There are few old soldiers in the film. *All Quiet* is youth's comment. Don't cry out against that, as everyone does, expecting one individual to represent the feelings of every type in all armies (if you want such composite expression, it is you that must read all the war-books, not the author who must combine them). *All Quiet* is meant to be the statement of the generation who were destroyed by the war though they might escape its shells. It is dignified and passionate. But it is youth all the time. In the film you notice again and again how very young they are, and that there are few others of any other age. And the point is that it is a youth that is no longer young. These boys who were at school when the war came are express-

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ing the youth of 1914. But I am not sure that the youth of 1914 felt that then; I think Remarque feels it in retrospect. Anyway, they are not youth now, though the film and the book are specifically youth's cry against war. It is 1914 youth's cry . . . and it is made in 1930. It is a cry against the waste of war, against slaughter and destruction. But it ends there. What is 1930 youth to do? Nineteen-thirty youth agrees, it stretches out its hand, but it says there is something more. It says, this is the foundation. But what it wants to see, what it needs terribly to see is peace made an honest job of. Guts and all that. War is not bad only because it demands the kind of guts so many haven't got; it's criminal and senseless because it destroys and ruins so much else that people have got. And peace does that, too. Peace does that because it is not understood; because people get caught up in it in a different way, but caught up the same as they were caught up by the war; because so many people waste peace, as war once wasted them. 1930 youth knows peace is a thing to be grappled with, and after *All Quiet* (which has a negative value, a marvellous inspiring way of shouting "NO") 1930 youth needs very strongly, if all that isn't to be wasted, an equally fine and stirring "YES." It needs to be shown what there is to do, what outlets must be made, what the new life means. It needs to be trained, as much as those boys were trained. It needs joyful, constructive, adventurously serious films. And it needs to know where they are coming from. And can one go on saying Russia, when Russian films go on being not seen? And why should Russia be the only films? Why should Russia be the only country that lives a 1930 life? that knows there are thrilling

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things to be done? Politically, the answer is obvious . . . take the answer or leave it, but a sense and an expression of ordinary life as something to grapple with and be grappled by is what we need. And *All Quiet*, surprisingly good and technically interesting as it is, doesn't do that.

* * *

Keeping size and scope solely as our bridge, leap from that to *The King of Jazz*. It is a big film. *The Hollywood Revue* was not. We all know what fools Universal made of themselves over the beginning of this film. But here it is, and it does entertain, in the way revues entertain. The colour is pleasing, funny new things are done with shadows in colour and there is a coloured cartoon in the Mickey fashion. The colour in *The Song of the Flame* was better, there it was worth a visit alone, lovely clear tints and even pure-ish whites, and by the end of *The King of Jazz* one is tired of the particular kinds of red and blue. One only sits through thinking how good it will be when yellow and emerald and violet come through. But *The King of Jazz* does move snappily, it is a unity and it has strange bits of composition. Nice things happen; though not nice enough. When a pattern is made of two heads and a mirror, so that there are four Beaton-ish heads, that is all right, but we have to watch them sing, and they might have done so much more, revolved or refracted. William Kent is delightful, and has some good sketches, and Laura la Plante, whom I hate, is funny and efficient. These two bring the humour up to a Cochran, if not to a Charlot, level, and that is no mean feat, as they say, in a film designed for the world markets J. D. Williams talks (and only talks) so much about. The dancing in *Monterey* is pleasant; through

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all the numbers there is quite an attempt at mounting, but particularly in this one. And the colours, the black and silver and the technicolour red are positively Manet—in movement. Then, and above all, there is Jacques Cartier's Voodoo dance. Drum, drum, drum, and a black nude figure dancing on a drum, in blue shadow. Very cleverly photographed so that one thinks perhaps there are two dancers, as the shadow is flung. The man has an enormous feather head-dress, and nothing else—or nothing else that is visible, and he dances. While the drum beats and nothing else. Doom, doom, doom, doom, doom. DOOM. Always one more than you can bear, one more than you expect. Doom, doom. This is marvellous.

But this heralds the *Rhapsody in Blue*, and here is the fault of the film, which sets out to have unity and shirks the real one inherent to it. *The King of Jazz* they call it, and a pretentious finale shows the music of the nations merging in the melting pot of America to form . . . jazz. As interpreted by Whiteman, understood. For some extraordinary reason men in pink coats sing *John Peel*. TOO embarrassing. But Africa is not there. Jazz, but no Africa! The only hint of jazz's debt to Africa is in the cartoon which opens the film, where Whiteman is humorously set "In wildest Africa." And the Voodoo dance is the best thing in the film. Why is there this unfairness to the Negroes? Isn't it perhaps because Whiteman no longer has the success he had, and this is due to the great popularity of Negro bands? Armstrongs and Duke Ellington's records sell in thousands, when they used to sell by the score. But Whiteman's don't sell in Harlem, though these now go up and down the States. And then, looking at the film, may it not be that this is Whiteman's

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come-back? If not that, his way of stopping a slip-down. To get at huger audiences via film. Whiteman's stuff, as one listens to it, is definitely and unchangeably old-fashioned. There's no thrill any more, no interest. One hardly notices the band in this film. It is very slick, that's all. Naturally Whiteman isn't going to harm his great effort by putting the new jazz Negro players alongside, or even by acknowledging his debt. And here we have the *Rhapsody in Blue*. Why bring that up? It has been played as well as it can be often enough; why not have something else? A film of this sort ought to have something new written for it, a darker rhapsody in a darker blue. It was played by my band, it was my greatest success, says Whiteman, looking back. Why look back? Why star the Rhapsody? It is old jazz, and so he knows how to play it. But John Murray Anderson does not know how to stage it. Or any of the scenes. The staging and the dresses are terribly dull and disappointing. The film, of course, does not take advantage, as we say, of more than a handful of camera tricks. But it is the best film-revue we have had (*Paramount on Parade* we have just not had yet), and it is something to be grateful for after *High Society Blues* and *Children of Pleasure* and *Puttin' on the Ritz* and *Fox Movietone Follies of 1930*. It has sweep and colour and wit and movement; mass and a little mounting and none too bad music . . . though the very best song of all is ruined by the most appalling person I have seen since Anita Page in *Broadway Melody*. She is called Jeanie Lang, and is technically known as a "boop-a-doop queen," I am sure she is. But then, it's a big film, and there's room for other things, such as William Kent, thank God.

ROBERT HERRING.

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IL PARLE... LA BELLE AFFAIRE

There is a conceited fellow about town who talks always and everywhere on this subject.—*Hazlitt*.

Exprimer verbalement sa pensée ! Quelle ivresse, enfin ! pour un muet d'origine ; quel déluge de sons à peine articulés. La pellicule bavarde ne se tient plus de joie, et son petit ruban strié de confidences, grâce à la complicité du sélénium, débite à qui veut l'entendre, tendres aveux et touchantes romances. Parfois, aussi, l'image, qui veut avoir les coudées franches, se fait accompagner de la synchrone rotation d'une galette musicale à tel point sensible qu'elle ne résiste point au chatouillement du pick-up. A bonne distance, dissimulé, car il n'est point esthétique, un volumineux haut-parleur, à son tour mis au courant, ne sachant rien garder, publie avec assurance les secrets qui d'aiguille en fil s'acheminent à son tympan métallique.

Le panatrope a ceci de commun avec les installations cinématographiques sonores, qu'il amplifie à l'excès et, par là, déforme les sons. Le gramophone, plus respectueux des lois de l'acoustique, conçu pour recréer un auditoire restreint, demeure d'une harmonieuse discrétion. La qualité du son est donc inévitablement sacrifiée, dans nos salles obscures, aux exigences d'une audition groupant un nombreux public.

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Et comme le cinéma, nous le constatons tous les jours, semble vouloir singer désormais le théâtre, qu'il espère même supplanter dans un avenir prochain, nous sommes bien fondé à signaler à ce parvenu qui déjà dédaigne les principes fondamentaux qui lui valurent d'être considéré comme un art indépendant, qu'il ne saurait jamais être qu'un puissant vulgarisateur. Sans doute, est-ce déjà bien quelque chose. Mais, perpétuant, multipliant même, les moyens faciles au détriment de l'introspection et de l'analyse psychologique, faisant appel aux clameurs du saxophone, aux banalités du dialogue pour suppléer à l'insuffisance notoire de l'inspiration et de génie descriptif de l'auteur, il s'éloigne inévitablement de ce que l'on est convenu d'appeler le langage mystérieux des images. Ce langage là, quoi qu'on en dise, n'appelait aucune confirmation verbale, et, en troquant le silence contre la parole, le cinéma s'est rapproché sans doute de l'expression populaire mais il a perdu, par contre, cette faculté de suggestion dont la délicatesse, la suavité, faisaient le charme subtil et pénétrant.

Il parle ! Et que dit-il ? Rien que nous n'ayions mille fois entendu et qui ne nous fasse l'effet d'un échange conventionnel de mots. Ses duos d'amour sont désormais de la plus plate sentimentalité : *Prix de Beaute*, *La Route est Belle*, *Hai-Tang*, et presque tous les talkies Made in U.S.A. en offrent de significatifs échantillons.

Il chante . . . et ce ne sont que très populaires refrains pour midinettes rêveuses et sportifs en tournée. Voir chanter, c'est à dire ne contempler vingt minutes durant (épargnez-nous tout au moins les gros-plans !) que les I et les O formés par les lèvres de l'acteur, tandis que, fixes et stupides, les yeux trahissent l'effort d'une performance sans attrait visuel, quel sup-

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plice ! Voir, d'autre part, telle équipe de musiciens, à qui le mot d'ordre est donné de sourire (quels sourires !) et de s'extasier sur l'habileté du soliste, ceci, en vérité, n'offre aucun intérêt.

Ils parlent, ce cher Harry, cette idéale Dolorès, ils chantent même, dites-vous ! En français, en anglais, en allemand ! C'est tout simplement merveilleux. Hélas ! ils articulent, tout au plus, d'autres, obscurs salariés, y vont de leurs poumons.

Il parle . . . la belle affaire ! Prêtons-nous l'oreille à tous les propos !

FREDDY CHEVALLEY.

THE MICHURINSKY NURSERY GARDEN

A Cultural Film in 6 parts. 1,871 metres. Sovino production. Director : V. F. Svetozarov. Operators : V. Popov and N. Yudin.

This film depicts the achievements of the I. V. Michurin Experimental Station in the town of Kozlov. Very remarkable things and phenomena are shown in it.

I. V. Michurin has cultivated new species of plants by way of hybridisation. Combining various hereditary features of plants he has produced new forms of them. It is difficult to credit that, in the northern climatic conditions of Central

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Russia, it would be possible for such delicate southern plants as, for instance, grape-vines, almonds, walnuts, peaches, apricots, etc., to develop and bear fruit. And yet it is a fact that these plants do live through the winter in the I. V. Michurin nursery garden in the open air, without artificial heating.

The film shows how I. V. Michurin achieves these results.

By means of elaborate multiplication the film exhibits the process of fertilisation in plants. I. V. Michurin has performed a number of interesting operations on the flowers of plants. He chooses the best buds, castrates them, and effects artificial fertilisation. By this means two different plants are artificially combined into one. Side by side with artificial fertilisation I. V. Michurin produces, in the event of the plants not crossing with one another, vegetative approximation by means of grafting. The grafting produces an approximation of species and, when they flower, it is possible to cross them. For instance, a tomato is grafted on a potato. If the pure species do not cross with one another directly, then I. V. Michurin creates hybrid forms by way of crossing, for instance a wild peach with a cultivated peach. Having procured in this way the hybrid of an almond, I. V. Michurin crosses the hybrid of an almond with the hybrid of a peach and obtains new forms—for instance, a frost-resisting almond, grape-vine, etc. In order to procure new forms of plants, I. V. Michurin employs various external means of influencing plants: the action of spirit vapour, ether, employment of vegetable and animal extracts and, finally, various “surgical” operations. The material relative to the above is illustrated in this film and is of a most valuable, basic and striking nature.

P. A.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

. THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED !

We understand that an attack is shortly to be made amongst others on *Close Up*, because of alleged propaganda for Russian films. While we are very interested to know that we are supposed to have done so much for Russia we must point out that our main object has been to provide a place where the intelligent English may read of new developments in cinematography and be kept in touch with the best films, whether made in England, Russia, Japan or the North Pole. *Close Up* is not and never has been a political paper. Not that we are afraid of being dubbed "left" or "right" or even "centre." Minds thus preoccupied are not our aim. It happens that we are concerned solely with cinematography as an art and prefer to deal with films untrammelled by affiliation with any political party. That *Turksib* with its portrayal of the building of a transcontinental railway should appeal more to the English with their tradition of adventure, than the many sequences of girls in nudity-with-jewels, is extremely distressing no doubt, to the conservative film element. But unhappily we have abundant proof in *Close Up* correspondence that our readers are in-

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telligent beings. It may seem absurd even to answer the queries about to be hurled at our heads. But as the days of fair play and reason seem to be past, we should like to remind our readers that we have reported the French avant-garde film beside the Sovkino production, the amateur one reel with the English cultural experiment, the Hollywood super together with the German art film, that we are entirely unconcerned with party politics, and have from time to time stated so in our pages.

We spend thousands a year on treatment of sickness, when, if we provided the proper nursery schools only a fraction of the amount would be necessary; there are still hundreds of schools on the Black List, and many children in these days of supposed civilization are walking six and eight miles a day through all weathers, and with little or no facilities for drying rain-wet clothes, to get what education they can in a class of fifty others. We make little attempt to apply the vocational training methods that are being more and more extensively used in other countries. We make, in fact, little or no attempt to save or use wisely the money that *Close Up* readers among others are paying to the tax collector. Any party confronted with concerns as grave as these who can waste its time and the ratepayers' money quibbling over small-time party jealousies instead of using its power to help work out a constructive policy in respect of education, unemployment, and the various crises in trade and commerce, is in need of extensive self-searching and re-organisation. Let it judge not that it be not judged!

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

BRYHER.

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We regret that owing to a printer's error, Monsieur F. Chevalley was not credited with the Sommaire Resumé, which he had selected and translated from articles in the issues of *Close Up* between January and June for the benefit of our foreign readers. Our thanks are due to Monsieur Chevalley for this work and our apologies that it was not ascribed to him in the Contents list.

BOOK REVIEWS.

FROM AMERICA.

Will it be necessary for *Close Up* to change its descriptive title to "The first Magazine Devoted to Films as an Art," for we have before us the first number of a new American monthly *Experimental Cinema* (1629, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Penn., U.S.A.) which describes itself as the only magazine in the United States devoted to the principles of the art of the motion picture.

Cinégraphs, whose names are familiar, have contributed to this first number dedicated to Form and Montage.

H. A. Potamkin has criticized Bryher's *Film Problems of Soviet Russia*. An extract from Pudowkin's *Film Direction and Film Manuscript* specially translated from the German, forms an article, although the complete work has already been published in an English edition. Seymour Stern writes upon the *Principles of the New World Cinema*, quoting from Eisenstein's article in the May, 1929 *Close Up*. *Dynamic Composition* is an interesting survey by Alexander Bashky,

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who we learn, appeared twenty years ago as the first and classical film-aesthetician.

It would hardly be just to criticize adversely the slight lack of "finish" in this number, for first numbers rarely foretell the exact style and form a new magazine will eventually develop, and in this reference I would like to pay a personal tribute to the present-day numbers of *Close Up* which contain nearly twice as many pages and eight times as many photographs as did the first number.

Best wishes for the future of *Experimental Cinema*, which is attempting to establish the Cinema as an art in a country which recognises it almost solely as an industry.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

PUBLISHERS.

In a search for interesting film literature, we have discovered the Malik Verlag, Berlin, whose aim is to popularize serious and valuable literature by publishing important works at extremely moderate prices.

Panzerkreuzer Potemkin, a little stiff-covered book priced at 1 mark is an example of the excellence of Malik's policy. The book by F. Slang, a well-known German journalist, is the actual story of the 1905 sailors' revolt, taken from authentic Russian documents and portrayed in a vivid and exciting style. The illustrations are actuality photographs—five of the original 1905 pictures and ten of the finest "stills" from Eisenstein's *Potemkin*.

Another 1 mark buchlein from the same publishers is

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Maxim Gorki's *Der 9 Januar*, an account of the events which took place in St. Petersburg upon that memorial date in 1905. The cover is a simple and powerful specimen of John Heartfield's celebrated photo-montage—very crimson blood-stains mounted on to a photograph of fallen citizens. The illustrations are again original photos and also realistic "stills" from Wiskowski's *The Black Sunday*.

In the Malik edition is to be found the translation of Upton Sinclair's *Zimmermann*, an adventure which is caused by the hero attempting to see three years after the war, in a cinema in Western City a film produced in Germany.

Malik have just published *Das Leben der Autos* by Ilja Ehrenburg, whose *Jeanne Ney* will not be forgotten. For a cover design Heartfield has wittily mounted the heads of the motor kings, Ford, Citroën, Rakowski and Deterding upon playing-cards in order to illustrate the quotation "History is a card-player—great men are only the knaves with which she trumps."

Though deploring to its utmost the furtherance of the "star system," one is unable to ignore a new German film-picture-book *Die göttliche Garbo* by Franze Blei and published by the Kindt and Bucher Verlag, who published the popular *Film-Photos wie noch nie*. To those who enjoyed Robert Herring's appreciation of Garbo in last month's *Close Up*, which in addition, published two photos of the irresistible one, this book will be a joy and a revelation. The text and Garbo's afterword are unimportant as is nearly always the case of introductions to modern picture-books. But the photos! Nearly fifty of them! Garbo the innocent, Garbo the wicked, Garbo the mother, the flapper, the gor-

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geous vamp. Passion with John Gilbert, meditation in *Totentanz der Liebe*, close-ups from all angles out of *Anna Christie*. Only one picture from *Gösta Berling* and none from *Joyless Street*. The photos have been beautifully reproduced and the pages are quite tastefully balanced. An English edition is now in course of preparation to meet the already great demand in England and America. Only those who do not like Garbo will not like this book. Garbo is wonderful and only Beachcomber has dared to say that that grand character in English fiction, Olive Cork is "Greta than Garbo."

Following on their amusing attack on the Censor, *Mother Goose Rhymes*, Messrs. Alfred A. Knopf, New York and London, have published *Not on the Screen*, the last novel written by Henry B. Fuller before his death. The book is a delicate travesty of a Hollywood film plot and comparisons are continuously made between the actions which the characters *really* do and those which they *would* have done on the screen. The present state of the Cinema as well as the public attitude towards it is rather aptly summed up in a phrase in the opening chapter:

In the lobby Howell said: "They might have worn simpler clothes and have lived in smaller rooms with quieter furniture, and have had a less exciting way of spending their evenings. . ."

The girl laughed. "Yes, they might have shown more mentality and better manners; and their grand affair might possibly have been raised to a higher plane. But the screen is the screen. . . Is that our bus?"

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

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THE POLITICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND DOCUMENTARY FILM.

Teakinopechat, 1929.

The fifty-four pages of this little volume consist almost entirely of reproductions of stills from various classes of Russian cultural films—travel and ethnographical films, news films, political propaganda films, scientific films and films illustrating all kinds of other phenomena and activities in various regions of the vast territories of the U.S.S.R. In his preface to the album, K. Shutko apologises for the shortcomings of Soviet achievements in the domain of cultural cinematography, but probably not all admirers of Russian films will share his regret that the cultural film has not been more consistently dominated by the aim of political enlightenment and will think that the interest and variety of the films exhibited in this album call rather for admiration than apology; certainly they afford convincing testimony of the wide range of research and achievement that has been and is being accomplished in the U.S.S.R., and are therefore in themselves a striking example of that indirect propaganda, which is often far more effective than the direct variety.

K. Shutko attaches special importance to the "chronicle" or news film—in accordance with the view of Lenin, who said: "The production of new films, permeated with communistic ideas and reflecting soviet activities, must start with the news film"—and he pays a special tribute to Vertov, the pioneer in this category of Russian film. As a matter of fact, the photography of the Soviet News-Chronicle film began on

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the very first day of the October Revolution, and at the present time the Sovkino Cultural Film Factory issues a weekly journal, of which the 200th number was issued in April, 1929. The news-film material is preserved in special museums at the various film organizations and is used for incorporation in other so-called "documentary films"—i.e., films based on photographs of scenes from actual life.

The films illustrated in this album date between 1926 and 1929, and the majority of them are Sovkino films, but other film organizations, such as Vufku, Mezhrabpom, etc., are also represented. They include a number of extremely interesting travel films, such as *The Gate of the Caucasus*, *The Country of the Nachkho* (Chechen), *The Roof of the World* (The Pamir), *The Heart of Asia* (Afghanistan), which not only afford striking illustrations of the scenery of these regions, but also of the natural resources and the mode of life in little-known districts and among little-known tribes.

Among scientific films there is the famous *Mechanics of the Human Brain*, embodying the results of Professor Pavlov's investigations into conditioned reflexes (made by Mezhrabpom in 1926) and a more recent film, *The Problem of Nourishment*, concerned with questions of digestion and nourishment, also based on the researches of Professor Pavlov and made by Sovkino in 1928. Then there is *The Fight for Health*, made by Sovkino in 1928-9 and illustrating the achievements of ten years of Soviet medicine, and *Alcohol*, made by Sovkino in 1929 and designed to show the evil effects of alcoholism. *A Day in the Day-Nurseries of the City* gives a pleasant and instructive picture of the work that is being done in these institutions for the protection of mother-

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hood and infancy, and *The Struggle for the Harvest*, made by I. Kopalin for Sovkino in 1927, is a forerunner of Eisenstein's *General Line*, being designed to promote the collectivization of agricultural work and the improvement of the harvest; this film is entirely based on documentary material.

The film, *The Sixth Part of the World*, (Sovkino 1926-7) was made by order of the Gostorg (State Trading Organization), and comprises illustrations of the activities of the inhabitants and the natural conditions in various parts of the U.S.S.R., with a view to showing the exporting possibilities of the country. Among the political and historical films is *The Fall of the Romanof Dynasty*, made by E. Shub for Sovkino in 1927, described as "an authentic cinema document of the near past." Another film, *In the Country of Lenin* is concerned with the arrival of foreign workers' delegations in the U.S.S.R., and was made specially for foreign countries. Then there are films showing the industries of the country, such as *Petroleum*; another, made by Gosvoin kino (State Military Cinema) is concerned with the use of tanks, chemical weapons, etc., etc.

A very interesting album, but for the English public a tantalizing one, because it whets an appetite which at present cannot be satisfied without a visit to Germany or Russia.

W. M. RAY.

ANTHOLOGY.

Imagist Anthology, 1930 (Chatto and Windus. 6s.): poems by H. D., William Carlos Williams, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, etc.

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H. D. who has done so much for films by writing about them in *Close Up* and acting for them in POOL films; H. D. whose poetry is so beautiful that it hurts.

There are other reasons why the cinéaste should buy the anthology.

Glancing at Joyce's *Tales Told from Shem and Shaun* one begins to imagine an esperanto for the screen. Talkies need not stay in the country of their origin if words are built up in the imagist way. Can we really think that we are doing anything with sound until we have done this with language? Would those who still rebel against speech be converted by a Joycian Conception of dialogue? O. B.

Thought varies from generation to generation and even in these days of quick travel, the youth of one country knows very little of how its own age group in another is regarding its same problems. Those who are interested will find the second number of *Der Neuen Jugend*, which has just reached us, a guide to what the young Austrian is considering and arguing with regard to all branches of art. Our Viennese correspondent, Miss Trude Weiss, has written for the paper an excellent summary of modern film tendencies. While much of the material will be familiar to *Close Up* readers, it is presented in a new way, and the magazine, being unpretentious and direct, gives more of the vitality and interest of modern Austria than could be found in a larger and more established journal. The photo montage of the cover is excellent. *Der Neuen Jugend* can be obtained from Schickplatz 4, Vienna IX, Austria, and the quarterly subscription is S1. 60.

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TWO DIRECTORS.

Mr. Joris Ivens, who has been looking round the London studios, told me that 900 cinemas are wired in Holland. Towns with only 6,000 inhabitants possess a wired theatre. Talkies are played in French and English; those with plenty of songs are preferred as they do not require such an accurate knowledge of the vernacular to be appreciated.

Holland, Mr. Ivens, hopes, may be able to win for itself a certain place in European production as French, English and German are taught in the schools. The climate, however, is hardly propitious. It was while Mr. Ivens was sitting with bowed head in a Dutch café, cursing the perpetual rain which would not let him work, that a friend had the idea that he should film *Rain*.

The "gladery" of amateurs will be great when they learn that *Zuiderzee* was the first film for which Mr. Ivens was commissioned. *The Bridge* and *Breakers* were made on individual initiative.

Mr. P. C. Barua, an Indian producer who has finished three pictures for British Dominion, is in London to look at the "laboratories." Luckily he believes "laboratories" are all the West can teach. The ideas of the native film can never interest the West while they strive to be Western. Mr. Barua trusts that the West will, eventually (after the "laboratories" have been studied), be interested to learn the true native traditions and customs.

"I will tell you," said Mr. Barua, "the secret about the Indian film. Some nations express themselves in dance: others in sport, but we are thinkers. We start a film; there

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is an argument; we forget about the argument and the film. By nature we are lethargic; by force of circumstances we have had to learn to be dependent. We are better at writing books. Do you know that in India so many books are sold, on an average, at the big book stores that business could not be brisker if they were situated in the Boulevard Raspail? And there is the censor. Bars against religious themes and the making of any stranger into a villain. Are you troubled with the censor in England?"

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

CONVERSATION.

Mr. J. E. said, "Mechanised music is not of a Robot world. Creation remains: the interpreter vanishes. And how musicians hate the interpreter. Artists would cry out if their pictures had to be copied by skilled craftsmen before being exhibited in public."

I suggested, "Mechanised music and mechanical music?"

He answered, "Such a difference between contraband charm of the barrel-organ and admiration for a piece executed with emotional significance on the pianola. A period of incubation. Mechanised music means the release of music from mathematics. A fugue by Bach is ten times more mechanical than an ordered arrangement of sounds plucked from life. We have been promised that the sonorous film means something bigger than conventionalised music. Wasn't it Meisel who talked of celluloid records in a library: the mounting of the thousand sounds of daily life."

IN PREPARATION.

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" Dare desperate dames deign
To go to market in the rain ? "

Three well-known authors worked for hours to achieve the above rhyme, which contains, however, the German declension of the definite article used in the singular with a masculine noun.

Nominative	the = der (dare)
Genitive	of the = des (<i>desperate</i>)
Dative	to the = dem (<i>dames</i>)
Accusative	the = den (<i>deign</i>)

Try to see in your head some old women perched on top of a cart full of vegetables, in their best clothes, going to market. Then think of a thunder storm coming up and imagine what would happen ! Finally repeat over and over to yourself

Dare desperate dames deign
To go to market in the rain ?

And when you really know it, try the German, der, des, dem, den.

From this example, you will see that your task will not be unduly taxing. And yet, when you have assimilated the whole of the fifty ingenious and engaging lessons, you will have a working knowledge of German which will be sufficient for all normal purposes, and carry you anywhere. Nobody unacquainted with the German tongue should be without it.

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CLOSEUP

"Won't it be too sentimental? Won't these sounds recall someone spoken to, someone parted from?"

(Firmly) "Work must never conform to a *priori* theory. Remember that machines do not change us; they establish new relations psychologically interesting."

O. B.

EXHIBIT.

Snapshots by royal photographers on view in Pall Mall East. *Pictures* by royal photographers, vide press. So far Golovnia and Tisse have not signed the visitor's book.

The italics are anybody's.

O. B.

PHOTOGRAPHIES MODERNES PRESENTEES PAR PIERRE BOST. (A. Calavas.)

When you untie the white tape, the twenty-four photographs fall out, and so does Pierre Bost's introduction, but otherwise the arrangement is convenient, and not least for the advantage of being able to re-adjust the order of the plates.

The introduction is short and sufficiently enlightened to be entitled to retain its privileged place at the beginning. Quotation is necessary. ["Les photographes d'aujourd'hui estiment qu'un visage exprime bien assez par lui-même et que leurs habiletés ne pourraient beaucoup y ajouter.] Leur plaisir est plutôt de jouer la difficulté, d'interroger les objets qui semblent n'avoir rien à dire; une fourchette, un uont, un oreiller, un pavé." "Le photographe pour découvrir dans l'objet connu, l'objet inconnu, a choisi le moyen le plus imprévu, et,

CLOSE UP

comme bien souvent, le plus simple : séparer l'objet du monde, et ne regarder que lui-même. Il y a une éclatante nouveauté dans toute chose, aussitôt qu'on lui accorde le droit d'exister pour soi-même. . . . Tel est proprement le rôle de la photographie : isoler, pour rendre étrange ce qui est familier."

We know that many photographers do try (with varying degrees of success) in isolating an object "en faire la matière d'un miracle," but whether photography should assign this limit to itself is another matter. The formula would hardly cover the work of Man Ray, Bruguere, or, say, Maurice Tabard. Though one may prefer to argue that these artists are perverting the camera to ends more suitably attained in a different medium. In any case the introduction should be read as a whole, since the principles of photography cannot be invoked to justify an isolation of this sort !

The photographs themselves have been chosen with discrimination, and some are outstanding. Those by Tabard appeared in *Bifur* where the second (Pl. 23) was balanced by another which might well have been included in this volume. A bold, even violent, use of light and dark distinguishes much of his work.

Meanwhile, impatient, we are waiting. . . .

H. A. M.

TOUCHING UNANIMITY. (The more we are together.)

"The pictures of amouïous passages, many of which, according to his (i.e., the native's) ideas, are very indecent, give him a deplorable impression of the morality of the white man and, worse still, of the white woman."

CLOSE UP

(Extract from article by Sir Hesketh Bell, G.C.M.G. in *Sunday Times*, 16th Feb. 1930.)

* * *

"The establishment of a Board in London . . . to censor all films for exhibition in Tropical Africa, is a practical suggestion which will readily commend itself to all those who have the best interests of the native races of these dependencies at heart, as well as the prestige of Europeans."

(Extract from letter signed E. B. Jarvis, published in *Sunday Times*, 23rd Feb. 1930.)

* * *

" . . . There is no gainsaying that the silly tosh often portrayed on American films does materially help to lower the prestige of the "white man" in the eyes of the unsophisticated native."

(Extract from letter signed Pee Jay in same issue.)

* * *

"The increase of crime out here (i.e. in Kenya) is in many instances due to the film, and anything that in any way decreases the prestige of white women in a black country is an abomination which should be firmly put down."

(Extract from letter signed C. Frere, published in *Sunday Times*, 11th May, 1930.)

A PROPOS DE NICE.

par Jean Vigo et Boris Kaufman.

A Propos de Nice, intéressante bande de huit cent mètres marque les débuts cinématographiques d'un nouveau jeune :

CLOSE UP

Jean Vigo qui a jugé utile de s'élancer sur cette voie nouvelle en compagnie d'un ami déjà expérimenté : Boris Kaufman.

Curieux film sans doute mais dont on n'appréciera peut-être pas entièrement les efforts, études et recherches, les observations qu'il a nécessités. Car il est toujours très difficile pour un étranger de saisir très justement la transcription cinématographique des us et coutumes d'une ville ou d'un pays inconnu et d'autant plus si le réalisateur ne dédaigne pas la satire et la caricature.

Jean Vigo m'a avoué avoir été fortement impressionné par *Le Chien Andalou* ; il aime, et on ne saurait lui en faire grief, les films qui, après leur projection obligent le spectateur à penser et réfléchir ; formule fort difficile en général à faire admettre au " gros public " dans l'ensemble assez paresseux et qui a pris l'habitude de deviner les faits avant même leur projection.

Après avoir situé Nice par quelques vues heureuses, les deux réalisateurs ne se sont pas attachés seulement à ses particularités locales, pittoresques certes mais sur lesquelles ils ont préféré ne pas insister ; ils ont étudié aussi l'atmosphère générale de la ville, son cosmopolitisme, ses contrastes heureux et douloureux, sa vie de fêtes et de plaisir.

Répetons le, quoique conçu sur un plan nettement établi, le film paraît parfois manquer d'enchaînement.

Il n'en demeure pas moins vrai qu'il est à étudier et qu'il faut lui reconnaître des trouvailles heureuses et des " gag " divertissants.

MAURICE M. BESSY.

CLOSE UP

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

Warner Brothers continue to live up to their reputation as cinema pioneers. Having started the talking picture on its way, they are now planning to make film television a practical reality. To this end they have purchased the Nakken patents for television production and projection. Incidentally, they have also acquired the Nakken method of film sound recording, with which they will replace their present Vitaphone disc method. Furthermore, as a pioneer move on the part of Hollywood to produce pictures in foreign countries, they have recently closed a deal with the German Küchenmeister and Tobis interests, and under this merger will soon start productions in Berlin, Paris and London. And already their lead has been followed by Paramount-Lasky (to be known hereafter as Paramount Publix Corporation), who are planning the building of a studio in Paris.

* * *

Universal have completed nine foreign-language versions of Paul Whiteman's *King of Jazz Revue*. These are in Swedish, German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Hungarian, Italian, Czechoslovakian, and Japanese. Prompted by the furore created in America by *All Quiet on the Western Front*, this Universal production is also scheduled for translation into several European languages.

* * *

RKO are producing a spectacularly novel picture in the shape of a railroad story, *The Stalwart*. The scenes are being taken along a railroad from Butte, Montana, to Chicago, a distance of some fifteen hundred miles in a direct line. Alto-

CLOSE UP

gether, however, more than 25,000 miles will be covered by the travelling company of one hundred technicians and players, and virtually every type of scenery in the United States will be filmed, while incidentally portraying in all its interesting details the operation of great railway system. Revolutionary methods in both photography and sound recording will be employed, including the newly developed RKO "beam microphone," by which the sound or voice is carried to a distant microphone by means of a beam of light.

* * *

An extensive programme of establishing closer contact between the creative side of the motion-picture industry and colleges, universities, religious and welfare organizations has been inaugurated by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Dr. Clinton Wunder, with many years experience in public-relations work, has been selected to supervise this new and important undertaking.

* * *

The Hollywood custom of showing pictures before release, in Los Angeles and neighbouring-town theatres, in order to test their effect on audiences, is now being extended to include foreign-language films produced for the foreign markets. "Previews" of such pictures are given in the theatres of Los Angeles' foreign settlements and the reactions of the audiences are accepted as criteria of the films' marketability abroad.

* * *

M-G-M studio continues to lead all others in the number of actors, directors, playwrights imported directly from abroad for the making of foreign-language pictures. Already this one studio alone has a sizable foreign colony under its exclu-

CLOSE UP

sive control, with the result that its pictures for the European market are now made solely by representatives of the respective countries for which the films are intended. There is nothing of Hollywood personality about them, from scenarist to camera-man—Hollywood contributing only the money, the location and the machinery.

* * *

Universal Company are sending a company to Borneo, to film a jungle picture, *Ourang*. While it will revolve around a dramatic story, the picture is designed, also, to be of scientific interest, and to this end the cinema expedition is accompanied by Professor Bruce Harrison, of the biological department of the University of Southern California.

The heavy-artillery fire heard in *All Quiet on the Western Front* is in reality the reproduction of thunder. During one of Southern California's rare thunder storms, some enterprising "sound recordist" of the Universal Company obtained a phono-film record of the storm, and its crashes and reverberations were effectively "dubbed" into the picture as a background accompaniment to the uproar of its battle scenes.

C. H.

We have been requested to insert the following notice of an exhibition which will contain much to interest many of our readers.

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Visitors to London who take an interest in education should take care not to miss an Exhibition of a novel kind which is to

CLOSE UP

be held at the London School of Economics from September 4th-6th. At this Exhibition the British Institute of Adult Education has arranged to give the public its first opportunity in this country to see gathered together under one roof all the various mechanical devices that have been perfected in recent years for assisting education. This Exhibition is inspired primarily by the growing interest which has been taken in the possibilities of the cinema in this direction, not merely in the schoolroom and the lecture-room, but also in the general intellectual life of the community. But the films cannot be separated from the new "talkies," and these have their affinity with broadcasting, television, the gramophone, and scores of kindred devices. At this Exhibition examples of apparatus will be on show ranging from the cheapest and simplest projector up to the most elaborate talkie machine. Continuous demonstrations will be given of educational films, of broadcasting and television, etc. Finally, a comprehensive catalogue of the whole will be issued, which is likely to be of permanent value to students and teachers all over the Empire.

Nothing similar to this Exhibition has been attempted before in this country, and it will be a revelation to many to find what a large variety of mechanical inventions can now be pressed into the service of education, through the use either of the eye or of the ear, or combining both. Admission to the Exhibition will be free, and full particulars can be obtained from the British Institute of Adult Education, 39, Bedford Square, W.C.1.

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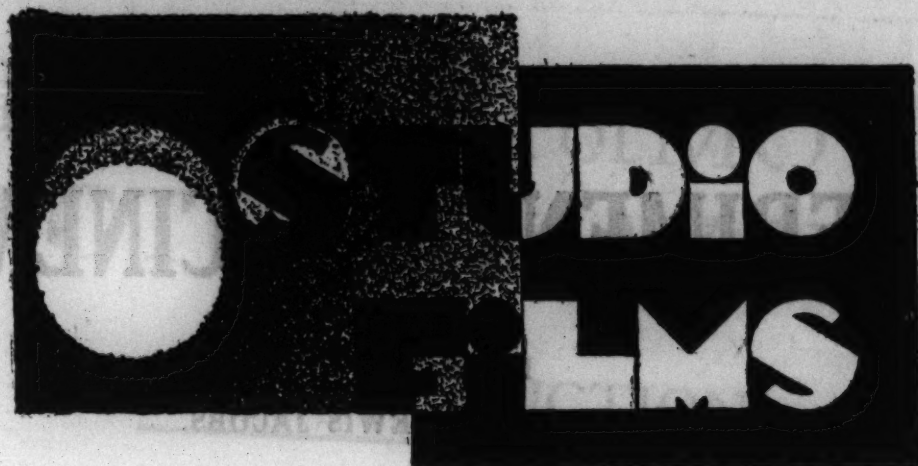
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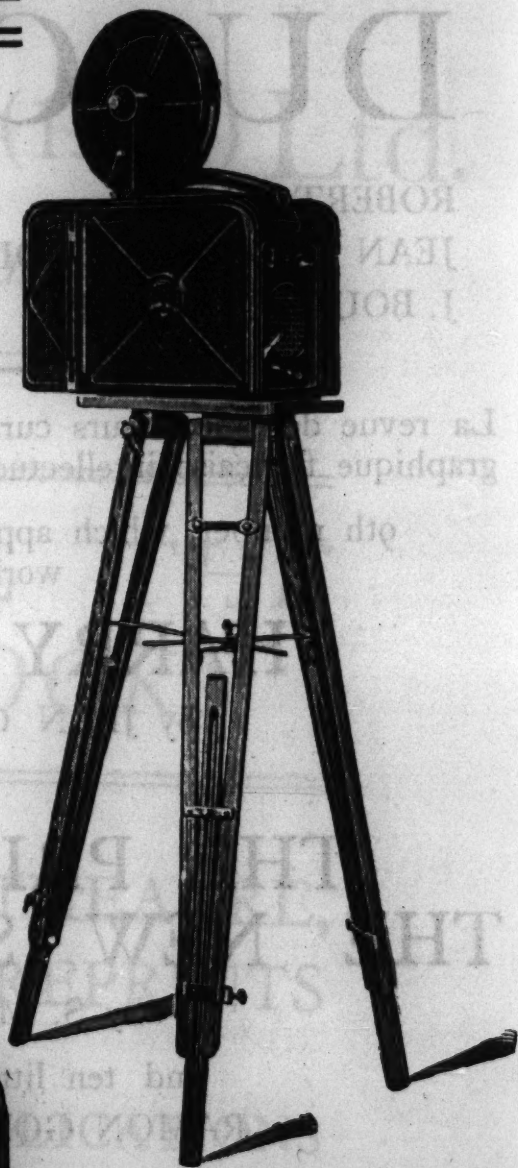
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